POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING CONFLICT:

A CASE STUDY OF THE CONFLICT AREAS IN

SONGKHLA AND PATTANI PROVINCES OF THAILAND

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Loungphor Thavorn,
My greatest hero, inspiration, and role model.

I also dedicated the thesis to my mother, Chanisa Chantra, and my aunt, Laor Chantra.
I attribute all my success in life to these two wonderful women.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand and the political participation of people in the conflict areas by focusing on both electoral and non-electoral modes of participation. In this thesis, we hypothesized that first, conflict leads to a greater desire for peaceful political participation. Second, people in a conflict zone are more likely to participate in politics in other forms, including electoral and non-electoral ways. Third, there is a relationship between level of violence and level of political participation: the same concerns that lead to violence also lead to participation; people's experiences of the conflict and violence have an additional impact on their desire for political participation, thus, high levels of violence correlate with high levels of peaceful participation. Fourth, a weak civil society failing to promote popular interests and resist state domination will lead to more conflict. Finally, a strong state preventing demands and closing channels for peaceful political participation will lead to more conflict.

In this thesis, we explore political participation through three channels; 1) political participation through elections which includes political participation of both voters and politicians in parliamentary, senate, and local elections, 2) political participation through the state which focuses on three main state actors, security officials, justice officials, and local authorities, and 3) political participation through civil society, examining five different groups of civil society actors, including the youth, women, business, religious leaders, and the media. Following this, the thesis draws a comparison among three different levels of conflict areas, which are non violence, low violence, and high violence conflict areas in

Pattani and Songkhla, in order to discover if there are any linkages between the levels of conflict in the Deep South and the level of political participation of people in the region.

In this thesis, we see that conflict can be seen as a form of participation, albeit a violent form. The conflict and violence creates a greater desire for people to be more active in politics through peaceful means as they seek to reduce suffering from the insurgent violence. This study finds that people in the conflict areas of the Deep South are more likely to participate through many channels when they perceive incentives are high enough to overcome risks. The thesis reveals that the levels of violence and levels of some forms of political participation are correlated: the more frequent the violent incidents, the higher the level of voter turnout. The roles of civil society are also increasing in the Deep South, even though many CSO activities are controlled by the state. State control, through either funding or coercion, decreases meaningful participation and makes some participation with the state illegitimate, for many in the Deep South. When people realize that their participation is not free will, they may turn to violence as they think it is the only means to resist and freely express their opposing political views. However, other people participate, despite state control, because participation can be a useful tool for challenging and resisting the state, but in peaceful way.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

Introduction

The struggles between Malay-Muslim separatists and Thai authorities in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, namely Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and the four districts of Songkhla have occurred for more than a century. As recorded by the Deep South Watch Organization, since 2004 more than 6700 people[1], both Buddhists and Muslims, have died in the ongoing crisis and several thousands have been injured. Despite more than 264,953 million baht[2] (*Komchadluek*, 4 January 2016) of government budget that have been dumped to deal with the problem in the south for over 10 years since 2004, there is still no concrete solution and there seems to be no end in sight.

The area has a long history of resistance to the authority of central government since being incorporated by the kingdom of Thailand in 1902. Since Thaksin Shinawatra came to power as prime minister of Thailand in January 2001 and employed hard-line policies as well as limited popular participation in political activities, the security situation in Thailand's three southernmost provinces, plus four violence-affected districts of Songkhla, has deteriorated. Since then, shootings, arson, and bombings have continued on an almost daily basis in the three provinces by unidentified groups of people marking a new level of insurgency beyond that in other regions of Southeast Asia and one not seen in Thailand for over 30 years

[1] The number of deaths in the three southern border provinces and four districts of Songkhla since the re-emergence of violence in 2004, according to the Deep South Incident Database (DSID), is 6,745 and number of injured is 12,375, updated to September 2016. For the latest statistics of the Deep South unrest, visit www.deepsouthwatch.org.

[2] The amount of government budget for the Deep South is as of 2016.

(Albritton 2005: 166). The violence signified a new level of the "age-old ethno-political conflict" in the Thai south and stressed the hostile relationships between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai state (Thanet 2004: 8).

Interestingly, depsite the ongoing attacks, the local people in the area do not disregard participation in voting and other political activities. The voter turnout rate of the national elections in 2005 and 2011 collected by the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand surprisingly shows an increasing rate of voter turnout in the southernmost area where the conflict continues. The voter turnout rate of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat in 2011 increased 2.2%, 5.3%, and 6%, respectively, from the year 2005.

Besides elections, political participation of people in the form of non-electoral activities such as interest group involvement, civil society or in participation in community political activities is also rising. However, popular participation is more or less neglected by the government. Research by Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, Prince of Songkhla University in 2011[3] shows local people in the three southernmost provinces perceive one of the main reasons why the government's Community Economic Development Plan failed is because people in the area did not have an opportunity in planning and participating in the project. Although there are people who believe in political participation, the fear of being suspected by both militants and the Thai military which can cause difficulty in livelihood or even death impedes them from participating in any political activities. Consequently, some of them choose to keep themselves low profile and stay out of politics in any forms.

[3] The research was conducted by the Deep South Watch Organization in September 2011 by surveying 3,031 people in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwas. Srisomphop Jitpiromsri, 'Kwamrounrang tee yuedyuea ruearung nai satanakarn karnMueang tee mai naenorn lung karnlueaktung 2554' [The prolonged violence during uncertain political situation after the 2011 national election], *Deep South Watch*, (published online 27 September 2011) <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/2305>. accessed 11 February 2012.

The answer to the question of why most of the people living in the midst of longstanding ethnic conflict and violence in southernmost Thailand, despite the ineffectiveness of politics, still participate politically has not yet been discovered. Therefore, this study will examine political participation in the conflict area in the southernmost part of Thailand by focusing on both electoral and non-electoral modes of participation. Moreover, the study will investigate the role of the state and its agencies, as well as the governmental response to the political activities of southern people in the conflict area. Also, the involvement and roles of civil society, including economic, political and religious sectors are investigated in order to explore how these actors play their roles in the local politics of participation and whether conflict experiences result in changes in the level of political participation or not.

The thesis will proceed in this way: Chapter two provides a theoretical review on the concept of political participation. According to the review, political participation can be broadly defined to include any activities intended to affect public policies. However, for the aim of comprehensive analysis and clarity, the term political participation in this thesis will refer to those political actions undertaken by ordinary citizens, both individual and collective, that are intended either directly to affect governmental decision-making on public policy or to indirectly affect social change. In addition, the second chapter examines factors influencing political participation from various studies, ranging from socioeconomic status, to life-cycle model, to attitude and personality, to ethnicity and ti experiences of conflict and violence.

Also, this chapter discusses modes of political participation. Based on the study of well-known scholars in the field of political participation such as Lester Milbrath, Verba & Nie, and Huntington & Nelson, this thesis divided modes of participation into three categories, including political participation through elections, political participation through the state, and political participation through civil society. Then, the chapter reviews political

participation in Thailand and, particularly in the southern border provinces of Thailand in order to assess the development and challenges of political participation since the change of the Thai government system to constitutional democracy in 1932. After that, chapter two examines the linkage of the two different terms, conflict and participation. This chapter aims to review the comprehensive effect of conflict and violence, which, according to the literature review, does not always lead to negative consequences. Instead, conflict and violence can act as a driving factor of participation. Also, the research methodology is described in the second chapter to allow readers to understand how the data and information used in this thesis is collected and analyzed.

Chapter three presents an introduction of political participation in the Deep South of Thailand in the earlier period before the reoccurrence of violence in the 2000s. This chapter considers how local people, when conflict and violence was not a major concern, participated in both electoral and non-electoral participation. The study also examines grievances in participation of local people in the earlier period as they could possibly affect the degree and pattern of political participation in the current period. The third chapter thus provides background of political participation in the Deep South of Thailand before the upsurge of violent incidents in 2004. The objective of this chapter is to observe if there is any change in political participation between the periods before and after the conflict and violence expanded in 2004. The three modes of political participation, including electoral participation, participation through the state, and civil society are discussed in the third chapter.

Then, chapter four begins to discuss electoral participation during the conflict in the Lower South since 2004. This chapter introduces significant aspects of electoral participation which are important to understand the influence of conflict and violence as a factor promoting or obstructing participation. The study of political participation through elections in this chapter is divided into two specific groups of political participants, voters and

politicians, to understand their broad patterns of political participation. For voters' participation, a special emphasis is given to not only elections in national level, but also local elections. Therefore, this chapter discusses voters' electoral participation by dividing it into 3 parts, including general elections, Senate elections, and local elections. For politicians' political participation, chapter four observes different groups of politicians, ranging from the most influential political group in the Deep South, the Wadah group, to the Darussalam group, and to the new players in national politics in the conflict areas of the Deep South. Some further examination on political participation of local politicians is also significant to understand the complexity of political participation during conflict and therefore included for analysis in this chapter. Then, the fourth chapter ends with a direct comparison of conflict and non conflict areas by dividing into three different violence conflict areas; Ranot and Sathing Phra districts of Songkhla represent non violence conflict areas, Chana and Thepa districts of Songkhla represent low violence conflict areas, and Mueang district of Pattani represents high violence conflict area.

Chapter five continues to examine participation during conflict, but moves to non-electoral form of participation, which is political participation through the state. Political participation through the state refers to political activities that citizens contact, voluntarily or involuntarily, with government officials. The fifth chapter intends to focus on both voluntary and involuntary political participation through the state by dividing into three main state actors, security officials, local authorities, and judicial officers. Our aim of this chapter is to illustrate the roles and influence of state actors as well as their relationship to local people and examine how their performances affect political participation of local people during the conflict. Then, we look at our case studies, where the degree of conflict and violence is varied, to testify the statement that conflict and violence can be used for motivation of participation, not only in elections, but also through contacting the state.

Chapter six examines political participation through civil society. The roles of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the conflict areas of the Deep South have been increased a lot since the re-emergence of violence in 2004. The sixth chapter starts with the discussions on the development of civil society organizations in the Deep South in the beginning period of the upsurge of violence. Most civil society's activities in the early period were mostly conducted by the expert-led CSOs and professional activists. Then, knowledge and the know-how of the expert-led CSOs were transferred to local people through their political participation in civil society. When the conflict and violence increased and continued, more local people participated, both as activists and participants. The sixth chapter intends to examine the five groups of civil society that have very important roles during conflict in the Deep South. The five groups of civil society include youth, women, business sector, religious sector, and the media group. The performance of civil society needs strong support from both local people and the Thai government. So, the sixth chapter will not complete if we do not understand the relationship between civil society and local people as well as between civil society and the government. In order to have a clearer picture of political participation through civil society, the final section draws a direct comparison from the three case studies. The sixth chapter presents that the differences in possible risks and incentives from the conflict and violence, a degree of state control, and the capabilities of CSO itself shaped a pattern of political participation through civil society.

The final chapter of this thesis attempts to validate all hypotheses. This chapter addresses five hypotheses that need to be examined to understand the effect of conflict and violence on political participation in order to response to the main objective of this thesis, which is to study the relationship between conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand and political participation of people in the conflict areas. Besides, the seventh chapter looks forward in giving some implications for the literature and Thai politics with an

attempt that this study would be useful not only for academic research, but also for policy formation and implementation in order to increase awareness of political participation and improve conflict situation in southern Thailand.

Since most of today's conflict and violence in southern Thailand are rooted in the past, paying attention to historical overviews of the conflict is very important to understand political behavior of people in the conflict areas nowadays. Understanding historical background is significant to understand why some Malay-Muslims in the Deep South have to rebel, why other Malay-Muslims choose to take part in the Thai political system, and why they have to take risk of political participation, despite living in the midst of ongoing violence. So, the following section presents the historical background that intends to articulate the depth and complexity of the struggles of Malay-Muslims in the Deep South since the early time before incorporating by the Thai Kingdom in 1902. When the readers read through following chapters of this thesis, they will have better insight on the complexity of Malay-Muslims' grievances and their motivations of participation.

Historical background of the conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand:

The three southernmost provinces of Thailand, namely Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, and the four districts of neighboring Songkhla, were historically part of the Kingdom of Patani[4] before being incorporated into the kingdom of Thailand in 1902. The majority ethnic community in these provinces is Malay and their religion is Islam, whereas Thailand (then

[4] "**Patani**" refers to the Malay Sultanate of Patani, being known as Greater Patani or Patani Raya, before the annexation by Siam, which included the present provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun, and part of Songkhla. "**Pattani**" (with two "t") refers to the Thai province of Pattani in the present day.

called Siam[5]) is a Buddhist-dominant nation. The Muslims in Thailand can be roughly divided into two groups[6]. One is the Muslims who speak the Malay language and live in the four southern provinces of Thailand, Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun. However, nowadays many Malay-Muslims in Satun and urban people in the three southern provinces have begun speaking southern Thai rather than the Malay language. Another group is the Muslims who speak Thai and live in other parts of the country (McCargo 2007: 3 and Dorairajoo 2009: 63-64).

Historically, the concerned conflict area was called the "Four Southern Provinces", comprising Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun but the Malay-Muslims in Satun are more incorporated into Thai culture than other Malay-Muslims in the other three provinces. Originally, Satun was part of the Malay sultanate of Kedah and became part of Monthon Saiburi under Siamese authority in 1897. The boundary of Siam was re-drawn by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 or the Bangkok Treaty of 1909 between the British Empire and the Kingdom of Siam. According to this Treaty, most of Kedah was ceded to Britain, and Satun was given to Siam because its people were more integrated into the Siamese population (Thanet 2004: 1). Therefore, although Satun is one of the four provinces of Thailand which have a Muslim majority, Satun has not experienced any of the conflict caused by the Malay-Muslims attempt of separatism. Thus, after the 1970s, the conflict area in the southernmost provinces of Thailand was changed to the term of the "three southern provinces", including only Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat.

[5] Siam changed its name to Thailand in 1939.

[6] From now on, the Muslims who speak Malay will be referred as 'the Malay-Muslims' and the Muslims who speak Thai with no Malay ethnic will be referred as 'the Thai-Muslims'.

Understanding historical grievances

The Kingdom of Patani was originally known as the ancient Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom of Langkasuka until the fourteenth century (Islam 1998: 443). It was an important commercial hub for Asian and European traders so the city had a variety of ethnicities and religions during that time (Nilsen 2012: 38). However, in 1457, the kingdom of Patani replaced Hinduism and Buddhism by adopting Islam as a state region and large numbers of people, including the King, converted to Islam (Islam 1998: 443). Subsequently, the Kingdom's sociopolitical structure was mostly dominated by Muslim religious elites *(ulamas)* and the kingdom was reputed as one of the cradles of Islam in Southeast Asia (Dorairajoo 2009: 65).

After 1786, the Patani Kingdom was defeated by King Rama I or King Buddhayodfachulaloke, heir to the Chakri dynasty (r. 1782-1809). The Patani sultanate, in its relations with Siam, was regarded as a dependent state in a tributary system, where Siam was the suzerain and Patani was the vassal. The sultans were obliged to pay tribute to the kings of Siam as a symbol of loyalty and in return for protection from powerful enemies. Under the suzerain-vassal relationship, the Patani Kingdom, though not independent, had limited autonomy in the rule of its people (Thanet 2007: 15).

In 1809 King Rama II, or King Buddhalertla Napalai (r. 1809 – 1824) decided to divide the kingdom of Patani into seven Malay principalities *(Khaek Chet HuaMueang),* which were Pattani, Nongjik, Saiburi, Yala, Yaring, Ra-ngae, and Raman, in order to both weaken the power of Patani rulers and simplify central administrative management. Each principality was ruled by a heredity sultan who was given autonomy in taking care of his internal affairs (Kobkua 1984: 107). However, this rule was changed when King Rama V, or King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868-1910) wanted to modernize and centralize the state bureaucracy to resist the threats of Western colonialism during that time (Tej 1968). He reformed the

government system and introduced a new provincial administration, as known as Thesaphiban system, throughout the Kingdom.

The tributary states and outer provinces were gradually integrated into the centralized system of new provincial administration nationwide between 1892 and 1915. Despite an awareness of ethnic differences between the inner provinces and the tributary states and outer provinces, the government decided to ignore the ethnic and cultural differences and removed the names of provinces that indicated their ethnicities, for example the White Lao provinces were changed to *Monthon Isan* (the North-Eastern administrative area) and the seven Malay provinces were changed to *Boriwan Chet Hua Mueang* (the area of the seven provinces) in 1901 (Tej 1968: 262-263).

The seven Malay provinces were then integrated and were under control of the Siamese governor of Monthon Nakorn Srithammarat in 1901, whose authority was directly under Bangkok command. The tributary system was replaced with the taxation system (Ockey 2011: 100). Formerly, the task of collecting taxes was performed by the Patani elites and some of the collected taxes were paid as tribute to Bangkok. When Siam took over this task, the Patani rulers and elites felt they were losing their ruling power and control over their people (Dorairajoo 2009: 66).

According to Tej Bunnag (1968: 244-245), the reasons for this nationwide administration reform and centralization were to fulfill political, strategic, and financial objectives. Besides for modernization of the country, the integration was to defend the Kingdom's territory from France and Great Britain. Moreover, the integration could ensure loyalty of tributary states and outer provinces and also turn their labor and revenue to use for the Kingdom's political reform.

However, the reform did not go smoothly. There was resistance in many tributary states and outer provinces throughout the Kingdom, for example the uprising by the group of people called "*Phu mi bun*" (Holy men) in *Monthon Isan*[7] and the disturbances against the reforms in the North by the Shans (Tej 1968: 273-275). The Thai government also confronted opposition from the Malay provinces since the reform alienated most traditional elites as their power declined. The local elites, then, sent letters to request British protection in Singapore (then called Melayu) as they regarded Siam as encroaching on their traditional rights. Siam decided to apply strong and decisive measures to place the seven Malay states under the direct control of Siam and to prevent British intervention.

Consequently, the resistance against the new administrative system of Siam by local rulers appeared in 1902, known in Bangkok as "seven Malay Phraya conspired in a rebellion, R.S 121" (Kobkua 1984: 107). The resistance to Siamese rule was led by Tengku[8] Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin[9], the last Sultan of Patani, but he was defeated and charged with treason. Other sultans were convinced or coerced to accept the new provincial system as Siam promised to give them some privileges in return (Ockey 2011: 100). Therefore, the royal Patani dynasty was brought to an end and Siam officially proclaimed its authority over Patani.

After being annexed by the Kingdom of Thailand (then called Siam) in 1902, a measure reinforced by the Anglo-Siamese Treaties of 1904 and 1909 forced Thailand to cede claims to four southern Malay states, namely Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis (see

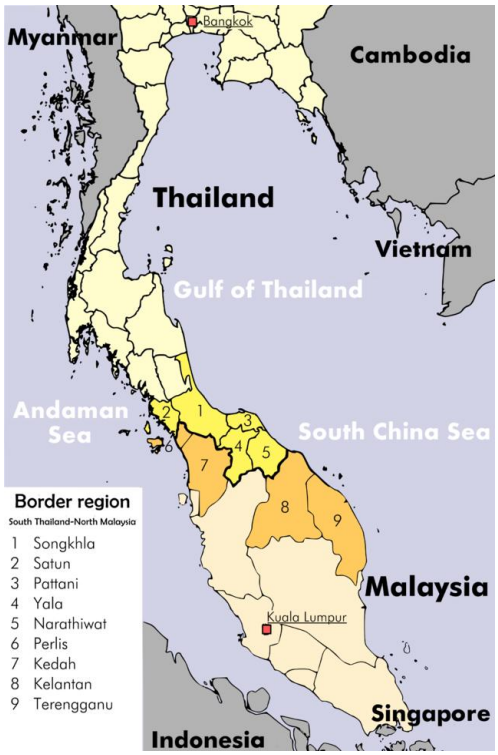
[7] For more information about the uprising of the Holy men, see Tej Bunnag, "Khabot Phu Mi Bun Pak Isan R.S 121" [The 1901-02 Holy Men's Rebellion in Northeastern Thailand], *Sangkhomsat Parithat* [Journal of the Social Sciences], 5: 1 (June 1967), pp. 78-86.

[8] Tengku or Tunku refers to prince or princess who is the heir of the royal houses of Malay.

[9] Tengku Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin was released in 1906. After another failed revolt in 1915, he then fled to Kelantan and passed away in 1933.

Figure 1-1), to the Great Britain in exchange for the reduction of British extra-territorial privilege of consular jurisdiction in Siam, loans for railway construction, and the cancellation of the secret convention of 1897, that Siam agreed not to grant any concession and territory in the Siamese Malay states without British approval (Klein 1969: 134).

Figure 1-1: Malay-Muslim provinces in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia



The takeover provoked a kind of hostility, especially among Patani elites who were loyal to the Sultans of Patani. As a result, the occupation of Siam without mutual consent of Patani residents brought about a national security problem in which there were uprisings and violence in the former Patani, mostly led by the local elites and traditional leaders, against Siamese control. One of the significant periods of unrest was the rebellion in 1922 by the villagers of Namsai village, in Mayo district of Pattani province. The rebellion occurred after

the Thai state implemented the Compulsory Primary Education Act of 1921. This Act required Malay-Muslim children to attend Thai primary schools. At first, many Malay-Muslims expressed their disagreement with this education reform by refusing to pay tax and land rent to the Thai state (Thanet 2008: 102). Then the disappointment in the government's education policies escalated to a violent clash in 1922. However, according to Phan-ngarm Gothammasan (2008: 11-12), the rebellion did not actually occur. The rebellion was only in the stage of planning and gathering support. The rebels got caught before the violent clash happened. Thus, this rebellion in 1922 was sometimes called "the abortive rebellion". However, this political unrest led to the realization of Malay nationalism (Thanet 2008: 102) and the improvement of civil services as well as the development of guidelines for Thai officials in the Lower South to be more conform to Malay-Muslim culture, called "the six principles of public policy" (Phanngarm 1998: 28-31).

Besides the disturbances in the South, Siam faced a political crisis in 1932 during the reign of King Prajadhipok (King Rama VII). The coup, led by a group of soldiers and civilian bureaucrats, who called themselves the People's Party, demanded a change of the traditional political system into a modern democratic form of government with a constitutional monarchy. On 24 June 1932, a coup successfully ended the absolute monarchy and the group consolidated its power. Phraya Manopakorn Nititada was selected by the leader of the People's Party, Pridi Phanomyong, to be the first Prime Minister of Thailand. Then, on 10 December 1932, the first constitution was promulgated by the King and a general election for the first time in the history of Thailand was held in November 1933 (Likhit 1992: 121-124).

Even though the first general election in 1933 was an indirect election in which voters elected their representative of a sub-district (Tambon) who then voted for the representative of that province to be a Member of Parliament (MP), this first election provided hopeful

opportunities, at least another channel to convey the message to the state, for the Malay-Muslims to participate in the Thai political process. Tengku Mahmud Mahyiddin[10], the youngest son of the last sultan of Patani, Tengku Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin, and one of the most important separatist leaders returned from Kelentan and desired to work within new political system of Thailand (Ockey 2008: 127). He told to the Thai government that "he would like to be a citizen living in Siam because Siam now has acceptable constitutional system" (Chalermkiat 1986: 45). Therefore, the new political system opened more channels not only for the Malay-Muslim voters but also traditional elites and separatists, some of whom had violently fought against the Thai state, to participate in Thai politics in order to pursue their goal of autonomy through the new political system.

As a result of the national election in 1938, Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram became prime minister of Thailand with full control of the army. His government issued nationalistic and integration policies in order to civilize and modernize Thai culture and create a unified nation-state by following the success of Japanese nationalism. Another reason for issuing assimilation policies, mentioned by Thongchai Winichakul (1994), was the fear of losing further territory. This fear led to the conception of Thai-self and other-selves, namely Mon, Karen, Shan, Lao, Hmong, Kmer, and Malay. Therefore, whenever these ethnicities were considered as a potential threat to sovereignty, Thais of diverse ethnicities were expected to give precedence to their national identity over their ethnicity. Particularly, when some Malay-Muslim rebel movements expressed their goals as separation from Thailand, this action created a negative perception and collective memory towards the ethnic Malay-Muslims as a possible threat to the nation-state of Thailand that needed to be dispelled (Dorairajoo 2004: 466).

[10] Tengku Mahmud Mahyiddin established the Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya or Greater Patani Malayu Association (GAMPAR) in 1948.

Thus, the concept of Thai nationalism was promoted and certain cultural rules were enforced nationwide according to the Thai Cultural Mandates or State Decrees issued between 1939 and 1942. These rules included mandates such as changing the name of the country from Siam to Thailand, wearing modern and international-style forms of dresses, trousers, and western-style hats as shown in

Figure 1-2, sitting on chairs at tables and using forks and spoons, instead of fingers, when eating, prohibiting betel chewing, promoting national pride and unity, and forcing the public to use the name "Thai" to refer to all Thais without subdividing them such as Northern Thais, Southern Thais, or Muslim Thais. The objective of Phibunsongkram's nation-building policy was to eliminate backward practices then reform, rebuild and standardize not only social and cultural behaviors but also the physical representations of the country (Thanet 2004: 23).

Figure 1-2: Thai advertised culture poster[11]

This Thai government poster showing prohibited dress on the left and proper dress on the right

[11] *Thai culture poster* [image], <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Thai_culture_poster.PNG>, accessed 20 April 2014.

A process of Thai-ness (also known as Thai-zation, Thaification, or Thai-cization) was also initiated to integrate all the non-Thai and non-Buddhist minority groups, including the Malay-Muslims in the far South. Although under the Thai constitution every Thai person has equal rights, Malay Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand, who are regarded as Thai nationals, feel deeply alienated from people in other parts of the country (McCargo 2011: 833-835). The feeling of exclusion was intensified when the Thai government again strongly promoted the concept of Thai-ness in the 1950s during the second term of Phibunsongkram with the belief that promoting common identity of being Thai would make all minority groups in the country enhance their sense of belonging to the Thai kingdom and this sense of belonging would attach them to the country and remove any threat that they could possibly cause against the nation (Christie 1996: 186).

Being born in Thailand and speaking Thai as a first language are not enough to be considered fully Thai. Being Thai also includes willingness to merge one's ethnicity, language and religious identity up into the dominant attitude of Thai-ness (McCargo 2011: 845). However, the Malay-Muslims in the southern border provinces of Thailand chose not to act according to the government's instructions on integration policy. They have a long history of fighting to preserve their ethnic identity for decades. One reason, that Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the southern Thai former foreign minister and the first ASEAN Secretary-General, pointed out, is that the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand have "geographical proximity to the larger Islamic Malay cultural world and the irredentist spirit of the population" (International Crisis Group 2005: 1). But the government has pretended to ignore that the country is comprised of different ethnic groups and insisted that everyone must be socialized in a certain way to be a "real" Thai citizen. The Thai government perceived the resistance of the Malay-Muslims in preserving their identity not only as a denial of Thai-ness integration policy but also as a perpetual threat to national security (Darairajoo 2009: 61). Consequently, the Thai

government refused to accept their ethnic identity and categorized the Malay-Muslims in the same group as Thai-Muslims, despite the historical fact that Thai-Muslims and Malay-Muslims are different. As Patrick Jory (2006: 43), a Thai cultural and political history scholar, commented, "within official discourse of Thai-ness while there is a place for Thai Muslims, it seems there is no place for Malays."

First, the most controversial policy of assimilation was the abolition of the Islamic law. Since the occupation of the Patani kingdom in 1902, the Siamese government applied the "colonial theory of plural jurisdictions" in the Malay South (Loos 2006: 6). The pluralistic legal system was one of the Siamese transformations due to European colonialism (Loos 2006: 3). Under this plural jurisdiction, the government established separate Islamic courts to apply Islamic family law; Thai law was employed in the Malay South only if one of the parties involved was a Buddhist Thai (Kobkua 1995: 70).

Nonetheless, the government, in 1943, replaced Islamic laws with Thai laws. The practices of Islam relating to family law (marriage and divorce) and inheritance were also abolished. For the Malay-Muslims, the replacement of the Islamic laws was very unacceptable because they regarded the Islamic laws as an essential part of life. Therefore, some of them chose to leave Thailand and migrated to other Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (Che Man 2003: 10). Islamic laws, however, were restored in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun again in 1946 during the period of Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyong and still exists today. .

Second, according to the 1921 Compulsory Primary Education Act, instead of studying at village schools run by "Toh Kru" (a Muslim senior religious teacher), all children were required to attend Thai primary schools where the medium of instruction was the Thai language and Buddhist ethics were taught, mostly by Thai monks who served as teachers (International Crisis Group 2005: 3). The teaching of the Malay language was banned and the

teaching of Quran and Arabic language were also forbidden (Chalermkiat 1986: 31). This regulation aimed at destabilizing the core of Malay influence and resulted in a slow but lasting integration of the Malay-Muslims to Thai domination but at the same time this strategy threatened the identity of the Malay-Muslims in the south (Dorairajoo 2004: 467).

Third, the former sultanate, which had been divided into seven provinces in 1808 during the reign of King Rama II, was re-centralized into the three provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, and Bangkok sent Thai governors to govern these three provinces under a centralized administrative system in 1933, in order to weaken the political power of traditional aristocrats. Fourth, according to the Thai Cultural Mandates or State Decrees, the government forbade Muslims to wear sarongs (Muslim traditional costumes) and use Malay names if they sought admission to government schools or employment in government services (Islam 1998: 444). Fifth, the Malay language was not allowed for teaching in the public schools or to be used in communications with government officials. Sixth, the Malay-Muslims were no longer allowed to have Fridays as public or school holidays (Thanet 2004: 26).

The Malay-Muslims considered this strict enforcement as a direct attack on their religious, linguistic and cultural identity. Even though Thai constitutions since 1932 have allowed freedom of religion in which every person shall have absolute freedom to profess and practice any religion, denomination or doctrine as long as such faith and practices are not in conflict with laws, public order, and morality of the country, Muslims in the far southern provinces still have had much to fear for their culture and way of life, as connected to their religious practices. They feared that government integration policy might turn their homeland into dar al-harb (house of war or the hostile territory to the Muslims). Consequently, these courses of action caused more anger, dissatisfaction, and resistance among Malay-Muslims, traditional elites, and religious teachers in the former Greater Patani. One main reason as to

why they strongly resist the Thai policy of integration is that, according to Clive Christie (1996), the Thai government attempted to break the link between the religion of Islam and the ethnicity of Malay-ness. Then, the modern Patani separatist and irredentist movement began in the late 1930s after the implementation of assimilation policies. There were rebellions and disturbances; schools were torched and Thai-Buddhist teachers were assassinated as a consequence of the Thai state's integration policy to Thai-icize the Malays of southern Thailand (Dorairajoo 2004: 465-466).

The governments that followed Phibunsongkram's government cancelled some of the assimilation policies towards Malay-Muslims in order to normalize the political turmoil in the Muslim south. The Islamic Patronage Act was issued in 1945 during the period of Prime Minister Khuang Aphaiwong, as advised by Pridi Phanomyong. Under this Act, Fridays became Muslim holidays; Islamic laws on family and inheritance were restored; the National Council for Islamic Affairs (NCIA) was established and functioned as Islamic advisory committees to Ministries of Interior and Education; the Provincial Council for Islamic Affairs (PCIA) was found in many provinces and worked as advisor to Thai authorities in the provinces; and the Chularajmontri[12] (head of all Muslims in Thailand) was re-appointed to act on behalf of the King regarding the matters of Muslims (Thanet 2004: 28). Although some of these integration policies thus loosened up after Prime Minister Phibunsongkram was overthrown in 1944, the negative feelings from unjust laws and practices were already rooted and embedded into the heart of Malay Muslims against the Bangkok government (Gowing 1975: 31).

[12] The appointment of Chularajmontri was established since the Ayuddhaya kingdom and there was no appointment of the new Chularajmontri since 1936.

Moreover, the socioeconomic inequality between Malay-Muslims and Thai Buddhists is also one of the main grievances of local people in southernmost Thailand. Despite their comparatively small size, the three southernmost provinces have plenty of natural resources but the economy of the Malay-Muslims has been in a very unsatisfactory situation, compared to the rest of the country. The Malay-Muslims mostly are fisherman, small farmers growing rubber trees, fruits, or vegetables, whereas Thai Buddhists who live in the same border region are mainly government officials, merchants and plantation owners while Sino-Thai, who comprise less than 6 percent of the total population in the three provinces, are mostly merchants and own most of the businesses in the area. The communication between these groups is thus rather formal in terms of socioeconomic positions between rulers and ruled and between traders and peasantry (Suhrke 1975: 194).

In addition, since World War II when the production of rubber became more profitable, the Thai government subsidized investment in rubber production and other cash crops in the Malay-Muslim villages by not only giving funds but also encouraging migration of non-Muslims from other parts of the country to southern Malay-Muslim provinces (Gowing 1975: 30). The government promised to provide 7-10 acres of land for each Thai-Buddhist family that migrated to the Malay-Muslim provinces (Che Man 2003: 13). This approach was partly intended to improve the agricultural production and partly to shift the balance of population between the Malay-Muslims and Thai-Buddhists The local Malay-Muslims inevitably feared their identity could be eroded and vanish from their homeland as the government could plan to submerge the Malay-Muslim population and change the Patani-Muslim region into a predominantly Buddhist area.

These negative attitudes were enhanced by oppressive actions of some heavy-handed, corrupt, and abusive government officials toward local Muslim people and even by some greedy and deceitful residents, both Muslims and Non-Muslims, who took advantage of this

vulnerable situation for their private interests (Gowing 1975: 31). Moreover, many complaints and petitions from the local Malay-Muslims concerning the cruel and unjust behavior of Thai officials, especially the police, were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth inciting pessimistic thoughts and simmered in the conflict in the Muslim south (Thanet 2004: 31).

The grievances mentioned above amplified antagonistic feelings of Malay-Muslims, stemming from traditional ruling elites and aristocracies who were discharged and disfranchised from their positions and power, to the local Malay-Muslims who were maltreated and abused by Thai officials and faced discrimination by unjust practices of Thai laws. They, thus, sought a way to reinstate their power, culture, and identity (Thanet 2004: 6). The hostile thoughts became more visible on a relatively small scale through the appearance of rebel groups and intermittent unrest, including guerilla operations, killings, intimidations, and kidnappings, during the 1960s – 1980s.

In addition, an expansion of conflict in the southernmost part of Thailand unavoidably involved neighboring Malaysia one way or another. The two nations have a connecting border between the conflict area of southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia and it was believed that the separatists used the Malaysia side of border as their sanctuary. Also, Malay-Muslims in the Thai South share the same identity of Malay and common religion of Islam so they gained some moral support from sympathizers in Malaysia. The Malaysian press and newspapers sometimes reported the insurgences in the Thai south in a supportive manner towards the Malay-Muslims in Thailand (Thanet 2004: 11). Thus, the violation of Malays-Muslims in Thailand concerns Malay-Muslims in Malaysia to some extent and this created a dilemma for the Malaysian government between the conflicting demands. On the one side, as a Muslim country where some of its people have the same identity and religion as people in the Thai south, the Malaysian government was expected to assist the Malay-Muslim

brotherhood in Thailand. On the other side, the Thai government resisted interference by any country and the Malaysian government would not want to have a problem in international relations with Thailand.

Besides the rebel movements of Malay separatism in Thailand, the border area of Thai South and Malay North was more tense when the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), officially known as the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), declared war on the Malaysian government (then called the Federation of Malaya) in 1948 and used the Thai side of the border as a shelter for its guerilla operations (Suhrke 1975: 196). In order to lessen the political and security tensions at the border, the two governments initiated various degrees of collaboration to contain both movements. However, the agreements between both governments were not as successful as they expected. The Malaysian government asked for Thai support in controlling the border areas that the MCP used as a sanctuary but the Thai government, at that time, had its own internal security problems to deal with Communist insurgents in the north and northeast and separatists in the south of Thailand. Thus, the government's reaction quite disappointed the Malaysian government by deciding to leave the MCP alone as long as it did not attack Thai forces (Suhrke 1975: 201).

The conflict in the southernmost part of Thailand, undoubtedly, drew attention from various countries and international organizations, especially, the Muslim countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the United Nations. Moreover, an estimated 250,000 Malay-Muslims in the Thai south signed a petition in 1947 asking for the United Nations to look after the Muslim separation in Thailand and demanding for the incorporation with the new Federation of Malaya (Suhrke 1975: 196), but there was no overt response from the UN. Some organizations may have covertly been given support and training from Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, although there is no concrete evidence so far. In terms of regional relationships, after the

ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was formed in 1967, although the organization's aim is to collaborate and accelerate economic growth, social and cultural development, and enhance regional peace among members, the Thai government preferred to isolate its internal security problems from international interference, including ASEAN. However, the Thai government recently accepted the role of the Malaysian government in facilitating peace talks, started in 2013, between the Thai government and representatives of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), one of the leading southern rebel groups.

Emergence of the fighters

The racist and centralized policies of the Thai state, exacerbated by mistreatments of corrupt and unjust Thai government officials, incited antagonism and contributed to Malay-Muslims rebellions. However, the rebel organizations in the south after the 1960s were dispersed and not unified. Some groups originated with and gained support from the old, less educated elites, including traditional religious leaders and teachers from the village, whereas some groups were established from the young, higher educated Muslims who had graduated from abroad such as Malaysian, Pakistani, Saudi Arabian, and Egyptian universities (Suhrke 1975: 199). Having study and experience from Islamic countries outside Thailand, the latter groups had ideas of Islam and a vision of the way to fight for their homelands in different ways from local religious elites. Although these groups and movements were different and complicated in terms of members and their operations, their aim was generally the same, that is to declare an independent state of Patani, or at least gain more autonomy from the Thai state.

One of the most significant and renowned rebellions, the "Haji[13] Sulong Rebellion" took place after the arrest of Haji Sulong Abdulkadir al-Fatani[14], the President of the Islamic Religious Council and a respected and influential Muslim fighter for Malay-Muslims in the Far South of Thailand, in January 1948, during Phibunsongkram's second premiership. As a modernist or new thinker, Haji Sulong was not popular among some traditional Muslim teachers. Some of them reported to a Monthon governor that Sulong could be considered as a "potential threat to the peace and security of the area" (Thanet 2004: 16). The government determined not to get involved in this religious conflict and no charge was announced against Haji Sulong at that time (Ockey 2011: 108). However, the government still kept an eye closely on those people who seemed to stand against the interests of Thai government. Undoubtedly, Haji Sulong was one of the persons whom the government placed under observation, especially after he established an Islamic organization in Pattani, the Patani People's Movement (PPM) in 1944 with an aim to encourage cooperation among Muslim leaders to fight against the Thai government's interference in Islamic and Malay culture (Thanet 2004: 27). He later helped initiate the seven-point demand[15] to the Thai government in 1947. This seven-point demand included:

(1) The appointment of a single individual with full powers to govern the four districts of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala and Satun, and in particular having authority to dismiss, suspend or replace all government servants, this individual to be local-born in one of the four districts and to be elected by the people.

[13] "Haji" is an Arabic word added to a person's name to indicate that he has made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

[14] "al-Fatani" means "of Patani". It is attached after the names of scholars who descend from the former Patani Kingdom.

[15] This version of the Seven-Point Demand was from Barbara Whittingham-Jones who visited Pattani in September 1947 and was likely to have obtained a copy from Haji Sulong.. See Barbara Whittingham-Jones, "Pattani-Malay State outside Malaya," *The Straits Times* (30 October 1947), p.8.

(2) Eighty per cent of government servants in the four districts to profess the Muslim religion.

(3) Malay and Siamese to be the official language.

(4) Malay to be the medium of instruction in the primary schools.

(5) Muslim law to be recognized and enforced in a separate Muslim Court other than the civil court where the onetime *kafir* (non-believer) sits as an assessor.

(6) All revenue and income derived from the four districts to be utilized within them.

(7) The formation of a Muslim Board having full powers to direct all Muslim affairs under the supreme authority of the heads of state mentioned in (1).

Because of his recognition and popularity among Muslims in the South, Sulong's point of view on Islamic identity was accepted widely in the Muslim community. Sulong's seven-point demand was claimed to be "the most progressive aspiration reflecting the contemporary political development of the people's experience" (Thanet 2004: 33). Nevertheless, the Thai government perceived the seven-point demand in an opposite way. Even though the seven-point demand did not openly mention separatism or political autonomy, the government response to Sulong's seven-point demand was limited. The government did not immediately refuse all seven demands but the government response was quite superficial. According to the government, the seven-point demands were accepted in principle but they were considered achievable only in the long term, except the demand on the separate Muslim court that was absolutely rejected (Ockey 2011: 115).

Not long after submitting the seven-point demand, Haji Sulong and his associates were arrested and charged with treason on 16 January 1948 under Khuang Aphaiwong's government. Later, a violent clash, as feared, occurred between Thai police and Malay-Muslims on 25-28 April 1948[16] at the village of Dusun Ynor, in Narathiwat province, which

[16] The period of Dusun Ynor Rebellion is quoted differently. Some sources recorded the incident happened on 26-27 April 1948 (Surin 1985), or 26-28 April 1948 (Thanet 2004).

was later known to the Thai as the "Dusun Ynor Rebellion". This rebellion was led by Haji Tingamae or Ma Tinga and occurred partly because of the accumulated feeling of fear and suspicion of the Thai officials towards local people during that time. So, when the police saw the villagers gathered to perform rituals, they suspected them of forming the unrest against the Thai state. The Thai police then opened fire in order to disperse the villagers. The clash, which lasted for three days, turned out to be a misunderstanding on the parts of the Thai police towards the Malay-Muslims (Thanet 2008: 118). It resulted in nunerous deaths on both sides[17]and many thousands of Malay Muslims escaping over the border into Malaysia (then called Malaya) (Chalermkiat 1986: 159).

Although the Thai government was able to contain the uprising after declaring a state of emergency in September 1948, the situation in the three southernmost provinces remained very tense. The unrest intensified again after the disappearance of Haji Sulong, who was later believed murdered by Thai police in 1954 (Brown 1988: 74). Even though the long attempt of Sulong in pursuing his desire for better Malay-Muslim community to the Thai government turned out badly, his effort to fight for the better livelihood of the Malay-Muslims exhibited an instance of how the Malay-Muslims participated and expressed their demands through open channels of participation in Thai political system. Also, the Sulong case revealed how difficult it was for the Malay-Muslims to fight for protecting their identity and how hard it is to demand their rights within the limited political participation channels of the Thai state of the time.

There was a mixture of feelings and reactions of southern Muslims to the mysterious death of Haji Sulong. Some Muslims were more afraid of government power and its brutal actions. They, then, chose to be quiet and cease involvement in any political activities, or

[17] The data on number of deaths from Dusun Ynor Rebellion was widely different ranging between 30 and 1100. See Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The silence of the bullet monument: Violence and "Truth" management, Dusun-Nyor 1948, and Krue-Ze 2004", *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(1): 2006, p. 19.

some even fled to Malaya (Chalermkiat 1986: 119), whereas other Muslims were inspired by the legend of Sulong and gathered to fight against the Thai government. The principles of Haji Sulong sparked a new vision and perception of Malay nationalism in which political autonomy based on Islamic principles would well suit a new development of democracy in Thailand at that time (Thanet 2004: 14). On the one hand, Haji Sulong had been suspected by the Thai government as a separatist and thought to be hostile to the Thai state ; on the other hand, he became the symbol of the Malay Muslim who fought honorably to protect Malay-Muslims' rights and identity against the racist policies and unjust practices of the Thai state. In the history of the Malay Muslim struggle against Thai authority and suppression, the leaders of earlier movements mostly were traditional leaders such as the raja or kings of the old Patani kingdom (Thanet 2004: 13). The emergence of Haji Sulong thus made a new story of the hero of Malay-Muslims.

Since Haji Sulong mysteriously disappeared, his legend and story has been carried on from generation to generation. Even though Sulong chose to fight non-violently within the Thai political system, his followers carried out his will in different ways. Some of them followed his practices of pursuing their goals within the system such as Den Tohmeena, the son of Haji Sulong and a former member of parliament, whereas some Malay-Muslims who were inspired by Sulong's belief and his fight gathered and formed underground organizations. Due to these many indignations and inspirations, several rebel organizations were established to fight against the Thai state.

The first to undertake violent resistance in the South was The Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP, or Patani National Liberation Front). The BNPP was found in 1959 by Tengku Abdul Jalal, a former Narathiwat MP in 1937 and 1938 elections and a supporter of Haji Sulong. The BNPP gained support from traditional aristocrats and religious leaders. The aim of this underground organization was to establish an Islamic state with

complete independence from Thailand. Throughout the 1960s, the BNPP undertook guerilla operations and engaged in intermittent violent clashes against state forces (Islam 1998: 446).

Subsequently, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN, or National Revolutionary Front) was also found in the early 1960s with its aim to establish the Islamic Republic of Patani (Islam 1998: 447). The founder of the organization was Ustaz Haji Abdul Karim Hassan, a Toh Kru at Ruso district in Narathiwat province. So, the main support of this group came mainly from the pondoks. The BRN also had a close relationship with the communist parties of Malaysia and Thailand. Unlike the BNPP, the BRN concentrated on political organization, especially in religious schools, rather than guerilla operations. The organization did not totally avoid violence and had its own armed group (International Crisis Group 2005: 7-8).

The third group, the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO)[18] was found by Tengku Bira Kotinila (Kabir Abdul Rahman or Weera Na Wangkram[19]), the heir of royal house of Patani who had finished political studies from India and received a Masters degree from Sweden. PULO was established in 1968 in Saudi Arabia with the objective to return independent Patani Raya to the Malay-Muslims. The members of this group were mainly recent Patani university graduates from Bangkok and overseas as well as the Malays (or Melayu) in Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. PULO even gave scholarships to Malay-Muslim students for further study in Bangkok, Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and European countries[20] (*www.puloinfo.net*). It is believed that PULO was very active and had the best trained and equipped armed force, making this organization the largest and most effective

[18] For more information on PULO, visit www.puloinfo.net.

[19] Some reports said Tengku Bira Kotinila's Thai name is Adul Na Wangkram**.**

[20] One example of the Malay-Muslim students, who received scholarship from the PULO was Da-Oh Maseng, or better known as Haji Da-Oh Thanam. He was a former member of PULO and received financial support from the PULO for further studying in Saudi Arabia and Syria, see Muhammad Dueramae and Thaweeporn Kummetha, 'Roi yim tee lao rueng khong 'Haji Da-Oh Thanam' chak sa phan Kor Tor jon theung karn phuk thot' [Smiling talks of Haji Da-Oh Thanam, from the Kor Tor bridge to the release on parole, *Prachathai*, (published online 27 September 2015) < http://prachatai.org/journal/2015/09/61612>, accessed 28 September 2015.

increased in the late 1960s and the violence expanded further in the late 1970s in the Muslim majority provinces of Thailand (International Crisis Group 2005: 8).

However, although the objective of these organizations was similar in achieving independence of Patani through armed combat, they did not cooperate with each other. They chose to carry out their operations independently (Islam 1998: 447). As a result, the guerilla attacks, especially the attacks on police stations, schools, and government buildings, in the three southernmost provinces: 9). According to the government report, during 1968-1975 there were 385 attacks with the Muslim insurgences; 329 Muslim deaths; 1,208 arrests; and 250 insurgent camps were destroyed (Che Man 2003: 15).

A moment of reconciliation

As a result of the assimilationist and seemingly racist, prejudiced and repressive policies against the Malay-Muslims by the Thai government, during the 1960s and 1970s, the rebellions increased and become more violent; there were guerilla operations, including extortion against local people, farmers, and local business owners, kidnapping, bombings of police stations and military installations, arson of schools and official places, and killings by several groups of separatists throughout the far south. The Malay-Muslims who lived in the violent conflict area of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat could not avoid the effect from these guerilla operations and were convinced to be a part of the operations (Che Man 2003: 15).

The Thai government recognized that increasing separatist activities and other disturbances in the Malay-Muslim areas not only undermined national security but also damaged the Thai economy. In addition, the government perceived that military operations alone were not able to counter this violence. Therefore, after many lessons Thai governments learned from the past, and later governments responded to the unrest and violence in a more

compromising way by applying both hard and soft methods to restrain the crisis and aim at integrating the Malay-Muslims. For the hard tactics, Thai governments sent military forces to fight against the separatists, mostly in cooperation with the Border Patrol Police, the paramilitary forces (*Thahan Phran*), and Buddhist and Muslim civilian volunteers (International Crisis Group 2005: 9).

For the soft tactics, the Thai government issued a series of policies in order to compromise on certain demands and quell the conflict. Several government programs were designed to improve socio-economic conditions in the provinces. First, the pondok schools were allowed to re-open and provide secular and Islamic education to Muslim students. Second, Malay-Muslims were permitted to keep their Muslim names. Third, the government in the 1970s offered some special privileges to the Muslim students, including quotas for admissions into the universities and government agencies and study tours to Bangkok at government expense. Fourth, the government launched extensive economic development projects in the Muslim majority provinces, including the construction of roads, schools, and universities, the development of irrigation systems and flood control projects and incentives to rubber plantation owners in replacing old trees with high-yield agriculture crops (Islam 1998: 447).

When General Prem Tinnasulanond was in power between 1980 and 1988, the soft methods were increasingly implemented to deal with the South problem. His policy was based on the concept known as "Politics Leading Military" by focusing on political participation, economic development, and amnesty rather than emphasizing only on sending troops into the problem area (International Crisis Group 2005: 11). His government issued Order No. 66/23 as a guideline for this "Politics Leading Military" policy, including;

(1) Politics must lead military in an effort to fight against the Communists and other armed insurgencies.

(2) Policy of Politics Leading Military must be employed indiscriminately to avoid the people's war.

(3) Armed counter-insurgencies must be changed to peaceful methods. (Che Man 2003: 16)

Also, General Prem initiated a new administrative system by appointing the Combined 43rd Civilian-Police-Military Command (CPM 43) to work together on security operations against the separatist movements and to halt the extrajudicial killings and disappearances in the Muslim provinces. At the same time, additional mega projects on economic development, infrastructure construction, and enhancing political participation were also implemented. Village committees were set up with the assistance of military personnel and government officials to support economic development and security at the village level (International Crisis Group 2005: 11). These development projects initiated by this government were aimed not only to improve socio-economic condition of the southern people but also to develop the loyalty of the Malay-Muslims towards the Thai government.

To effectively implement General Prem's new approach, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) was also initiated in 1981 to quell the conflict in the south. Although the SBPAC was under control of the Fourth Army Region commander, its strategy did not focus on the military way of fighting, but emphasized improving poor communication among various agencies, resolving problems between the Malay-Muslims and Thai government officials, overseeing economic development projects, and most importantly, creating more understanding of Malay-Muslim culture. Its staffs largely were local officials. For non-Malay personnel, knowledge and understanding of Malay-Muslim culture and language were provided in training before posting to the conflict area, and seminars for Malay-Muslim leaders were arranged to share their grievances with related

governmental agencies (International Crisis Group 2005: 11). SBPAC also worked closely with CMP-43 on security matters.

Successor governments continued to apply soft tactics to solve the conflict in the South. Chartchai Chunhawan's government (1988 – 1991) allowed the Muslims to practice their culture and religion more freely in order to encourage social harmony. The government of Chuan Leekphai (1992-1995), Democrat Party leader, also continued this policy and expanded economic development in the Malay-Muslim provinces. Later, when General Chavalit Yongchaiyut was in power in 1996-1997, he considered the conflict in the south as a serious problem that needed to be given with more attention. He implemented his policy, called Harapan Baru (New Aspiration), which was initially launched in 1989 when he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Supreme Command Headquarters, in order to achieve these three objectives 1) to improve quality of Malay-Muslim life and their democratic awareness 2) to enhance harmony among the different ethnic groups and create trust between government officials and the locals 3) to protect local culture and promote popular participation in solving problems in their own communities (Che Man 2003: 17).

Nonetheless, these integrative strategies towards the south problem, initiated by General Prem and followed by subsequent governments, could not solve a few major problems, including corruption and Thai domination of culture. For example, the street names were changed from Malay to Thai by the government, and the Malay-Muslim students were still encouraged to study and speak Thai. Even though this policy was workable in that many Malay-Muslim children now speak Thai, it created a side effect in causing negative attitudes and reactions against the Thai government as the Malay-Muslims perceived it as an attack on their culture.

However, despite these deficiencies, the conciliatory policy as well as the government's military offensive and its extensive intelligence networks seemed to be more or less successful as the economy rapidly developed in the south and the violence during the 1980s and early 1990s considerably decreased; the numbers of separatist members declined as some of them fled the country whereas some of them accepted the government's offer of amnesty and returned home to join the Thai army, or participate in the government's development programs and other state-supported activities (International Crisis Group 2005: 12). Therefore, during this period, it could be said that the situation in the Patani Muslim provinces turned to a low level of violence and higher level of involvement in political participation as there were more Malay-Muslim villagers actively involved in civilian political institutions (Dorairajoo 2009: 66). Although the government's policy of integration was still applied in some ways, the effective socioeconomic and political development minimized violent responses during this period.

The upsurge of the conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand since 2004:

Beginning of the reversal

The first election under the new constitution was held in 2001. The Democrat party utterly lost to the new shining political party, the Thai Rak Thai (TRT). Thaksin Shinawatra, the leader of the TRT party, took power of the government and became the 23rd prime minister of Thailand. However, during his first few years as prime minister, there was no sign of an increase in violence yet but the tensions were rising quietly. In 2004, it all went

downhill very suddenly. Among other problems, the government's declaration of a war on drugs and the decision to remove the military from its security responsibilities in the Malay Muslim provinces and hand over to police created more distrust and worsened the situation (Ockey 2008: 149-150).

Thaksin's policy during his first term before 2004 aimed at normalizing the far South by replacing policies initiated by former governments with his own strategies. He removed the military from power in the region as it was believed that in this situation of instability, a variety of groups, including the military and various political groups gained benefits from long-standing conflicts in the region such as budget allocations, corruption, and control of smuggling that prospered in the border region (McCargo 2006: 46-47). In May 2002, Thaksin abolished both the Combined 43rd Civilian-Police-Military Command (CPM 43) and the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC). These two agencies were military-led institutions established in the early 1980s during the government of General Prem Tinsulanonda and were considered to be major contributors to the success of the counter-insurgency campaign at that time. Then, he assigned the police to take primary control and responsibility over the violence in the South with the aim of dismantling the existing power structure. Consequently, the military felt a loss of prestige and influence, the army, then, stopped all cooperation with the police (Storey 2007: 5). Moreover, the government also sought to modernize the thousands of Islamic schools in Thailand. In addition, perceiving the importance of socio-economic development as a means to stop the violence, the Thaksin government continually injected development funds into the area by approving a 13,450 million baht (around $340 million US dollars[21]) aid package to the southern provinces. (Smiths 2004: 3-4).

[21] Exchange rate as of 30 March 2004: USD 1 = THB 39.59 from www.oanda.com

Nevertheless, the conflict worsened when Prime Minister Thaksin applied heavy-hand strategies nationwide by declaring a "War on Drugs" in February 2003. Although, it was seemingly successful in the view of the Thaksin government, as he announced his "victory" in the war on drugs on 1 December 2004, his forceful policy led to a growing number of extrajudicial disappearances and created a climate of fear throughout the country, especially in the three southern provinces, which stirred up a strong and hostile reaction from the insurgents (McCargo 2007: 4). In addition, the antagonistic atmosphere was inflamed when the police implemented Thaksin's heavy-handed policy using draconian tactics. The police started searching each suspect's home who had been accused of being drug dealers and/or insurgents and/or even who been accused of nothing, capturing them, without warrants, for investigations; many of them never returned home. The police were accused of involvement in many extrajudicial killings and disappearances. Nationwide, there were more than 70,000 people allegedly involved in the drug trade arrested and more than 2,500 were killed during Thaksin's war on drugs. According to the Royal Thai Police report, among all the deaths, there were only 1,329 involved in drug cases (Human Right Watch 2004: 9). Moreover, Thaksin's decision to support the post-September 11 "war on terrorism" declared by President George W. Bush and send Thai troops to Iraq further provoked Thailand's Muslim population, especially in the South.

The violence flared up in bloody incidents in 2004, starting with an attack on military and police installations, seizure of arms, and burning of schools by an unidentified group operating throughout Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat on January 4, 2004. It resulted in the deaths of four Buddhist soldiers after splitting them from the Muslim ones (Dorairajoo 2009: 67), 21 schools were burnt, and 400 rifles, 20 pistols, and 2 machine guns were stolen. Even though there were attacks on the military in the past, this time was seen as a great blow to Thai military prestige because the militants effectively harassed and outsmarted Thai military

forces by successfully escaping with hundreds of military weapons. Moreover, this attack signaled that the state was facing more effective and complicated groups of insurgents than the previous ones, and even Prime Minister Thaksin accepted that these attacks were a well-planned and well-coordinated operation.

Later, there was another incident of bloodshed between religious militants and military forces on April 28, 2004 at the historic Krue Se Mosque in Pattani which led to the death of roughly 108 militants and 5 members of the security forces (Albritton: 2005: 166). This violent confrontation reminded people of the Dusun Nyor Rebellion, which occurred in April 1948, and it was the first time in 56 years that this story was widely retold to the public. The document *Berjihad di Patani*, the holy war of Patani, was found after the attack, and stressed the Islamic-based motivation of the fight against the Thai state and *Kafir*, or unbelivers (Askew 2010: 125). However, the Thaksin government tried to convince the public that there was nothing involving religious or ethnic conflict. Thaksin claimed the militants rather were related to drug addicts or drug traffickers, as a result of the war on drugs, and to some politically influential groups who had been disadvantaged by the government's policies[22].

While the government did not believe that the violence was related to the separatist organizations, military officers were confident that the violence was instigated by well-organized Muslim separatist groups. Defence Minister Chettha Thanajaro told the media that "the attacks were carried out by Muslim separatists, and they may have received assistance from abroad. He described the attackers as 'well trained' and added that worse is yet to come." (*The Nation*, 29 April 2004) This difference of view could create confusion among Thai people and also showed the disunity between the government and security officers.

[22] For example, Thaksin talked to the media a day after the bloody event at Krue Se Mosque that "There is nothing to be afraid of. These are drug addicts." See "Southern Carnage: Kingdom shaken," The Nation, April 29, 2004.

Although government officials tried to link the violence with drug trafficking and claimed that the militants were drug addicts who fought for money or drugs, the relatives of the victims confirmed they were good people and had never shown their intention to fight. Duncan McCargo (2008: 135-136) interviewed the participants of the April 28 incident. Many of them said they were naïve and innocent. Some of them were tricked by persuading them to go to a wedding. The interviews by McCargo are similar to many of the interviews reported by *the Nation* and *Bangkok Post* where many relatives told reporters that their sons, brothers, and cousins were good people, unaggressive and never used any kind of drugs[23]. A later confrontation that escalated the violence happened after a demonstration outside the Tak Bai police station on 25 October 2004, when over a thousand Muslim protestors were arrested and piled five and six deep into army trucks. At least Seventy-eight Muslim men and boys died of suffocation en route to a military camp in Pattani (McCargo 2007: 4). It was widely accepted that many of the arrested protestors were just bystanders (Albritton 2005: 170). Since then, the violence in Thailand's three southernmost provinces has become one of the most significant concerns of the Thai government.

This violence[24] signified a new level of the "age-old ethno-political conflict" in the Thai south and stressed the hostile relationships between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai state (Thanet 2004: 8). In response to the increasing violence, Thaksin decided to respond to the rebels with harsh policies and tightened control over the conflict areas by declaring Martial Law in 2004 and through an Emergency Decree, after a series of bombings at Yala in July 2005, to give the state full control over the conflict, increasing state interference at the

[23] For example, 'Usri (a high school student who died from the April 28 attack)'s relatives insisted that the young man had been no drug addict, as the government tried to paint those who had taken part in Wednesday's attacks.', see "Slain teen said he was going to a nearby pondok," *The Nation*, May 2, 2004.

[24] The epidemic of violence in the southern province did not happen in Satun at all, even though the province has a Malay-Muslim majority. Songkhla became a new member of Thailand's three southern border provinces as the explosions and unrests have occurred there since 2004.

local level to suppress the violence. Under the Emergency Decree, the decision making on security issues was moved from military commanders to the prime minister, and the security services had immunity to search, investigate, and arrest suspects without a warrant and to hold the suspects for seven days without charge (Storey 2007: 5-6). The state became stronger as power was centralized to the national government and it expanded control over its citizens in all dimensions.

In addition, due to his policeman and millionaire background and having utmost power in the parliament, Thaksin himself was considered decisive and obstinate. He showed reluctance to accept any criticisms about him and his policies both public and in parliamentary debate. His policies thus reflected his dispositions, as the liberty of monitoring agencies, the media, including television, radio, and printed and online media were weaken during his time (Ockey 2008: 134). Moreover, the voices or opinions of MPs, journalists and academics, even reputably international organizations, such as, the United Nation, were ignored.

However, not all state responses under the Thaksin regime were oppressive. After the violence throughout the year 2004, there were arguments explaining that the current violence in the South was a result of underdevelopment and poverty of the Malay-Muslims in the conflict areas. The Thaksin government responded and demonstrated its agreement to this explanation by transferring massive amount of additional funds to the southern border provinces to solve the poverty problem hopefully within two years (Srisompob and Panyasak 2006: 112). Moreover, Thaksin supported the provincial project to introduce Halal food industrial complex in Pattani and planned to make the southern border provinces to be a major center of Halal food industry. However, the perception that socioeconomic grievances caused the upsurge of violence in the south was refuted by some scholars such as Srisomphob Jitpiromsri and Panyarak Sobhonvasu (2006) and Duncan McCargo (2008). They argued that

the conflict and violence should not simply be perceived as a result of underdevelopment and so the development funds would have little impact to lessen the violence.

Besides the economic development projects, the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) was established in March 2005 as an independent agency in response to domestic and international pressure and criticism after the Tak Bai bloodshed. This commission was appointed by Thaksin to understand and assess the crisis and political grievances and find out the most effective and peaceful resolution for the government (Storey 2007: 6). The agency was led by the highly-respected former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun and became a platform for cooperation between leading civil-society activists and intellectuals from Bangkok to the South. Even though its members were mainly non-Muslims and non-southern, the NRC is considered as the first encouraging step of the government in its attempts to deal with political grievances of people in the conflict area, rather than focusing only on security measures.

According to the NRC's report, religions or separatism only played a minor role in the current conflict. The key to reduce the violence in the lower South was peaceful reconciliation through non-violent methods and the assimilation should not be promoted (Ockey 2008: 136). The suggested long-term solutions were to support education and economic development, promote forgiveness and acceptance of differences by increasing mutual understanding among the Malay-Muslims, government officials, and Thais in order to reduce anger and resentment, and encourage grassroots participation, whereas the short-term solutions included withdrawal of the military and set up unarmed peace teams. However, Marc Askew (2010: 135) commented that it seemed "the NRC sidestepped the hard questions about the identity, motivations and support base of insurgents."

However, the NRC report, which was published in June 2006, was criticized by some intellectuals, the press, and the former leader and Privy Councillor, General Prem Tinsulanonda. General Prem disagreed with the NRC proposal on making Malay another working language in the Deep South and confirmed that the one and only national language of the country is Thai[25] and the Thaksin government agreed with Prem's argument[26], even though the NRC members tried to explain that the working language was not the same as the official language. Unfortunately, Thaksin followed very few of the Commission's suggestions and persisted in his heavy-handed approach. Duncan McCargo (2008: 10) commented that "the NRC's proposals were considered too progressive by most government officials but did not go nearly far enough for most Malay-Muslims."

Moreover, more than twelve thousands troops were sent to the area of violence (McCargo 2006: 62). One of the most arguable policies was the announcement on the zoning areas in the three southern provinces in 2005. Villages in the three southern border provinces including Songkhla were zoned into red, yellow, and green zone according to the degree of violence and suspected numbers of insurgents in the areas. The red zone villages, 358 from 1580 villages, were cut off government development funds. Thaksin said,

> Deprivation of government funding in the red zone areas was to prohibit (the insurgents) from using money for wrongdoings, including bombings, nail throwing onto roads, and shootings. If the villagers did not help each other (to improve the situation), government budgets, including the SML[27] would be removed (*Prachatai,* 17 February 2005).

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[25] "Prem not happy with NRC's idea," *The Nation*, 26 June 2006 <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Prem-not-happy-with-NRC-s-idea-30007305.html>, accessed 10 August 2014.

[26] "Govt backs Prem against use of Malay in South," *The Nation*, 27 June 2006 <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Govt-backs-Prem-against-use-of-Malay-in-South-30007409.html> , accessed 10 August 2014.

[27] The so-called SML (small-medium-large) program was one of the Thaksin's populist policies to allocate government budget to each village in the country. The amount of allocated budgets

However, there were concerns from scholars that this policy lacked of understanding and not a way to stop the violence. As Chaiwat Satha-Anand (2005) commented, the government was performing two policies in opposite directions. On the one hand, the Thaksin government injected vast amount of government special budget in the Malay-Muslim provinces because of perceiving the poverty problem as a cause of the violence. Giving them money, therefore, could lessen the violence. On the other hand, the Thaksin government cut off development budget in the red zone villages because Thaksin believed injecting more money to the red zone villages could be dangerous and lead to more violence. Chaiwat remarked, the Thaksin government's strategies on the zoning areas and cutting their development budget were rather a punishment to the violent areas but the appropriate solutions should be based on understanding rather than punishing (*Manager*, 17 February 2005).

Whilst Thaksin's harsh policies were more or less seen as politically popular and acceptable in other parts of the country, people in the southernmost provinces rated Thaksin's policy as counterproductive and unsuccessful (International Crisis Group 2005: 1). Even though the harshness may have initially been popular elsewhere, when it did not work people began to question it and wanted an end to the conflict.

Most Thai news reported in 2004 was dominated by the crisis in the south which created a depressed atmosphere throughout the country. Although there were reports and complaints from newspapers and the locals of the killings and disappearances of around 200 local Muslims by local police and military in the first half of the year 2004, these grievances were concealed by the shocking news of daily killings by the Malay-Muslim separatist movements. The brutal killings, beheadings, and body burnings caused fear of both Thais and Malay-Muslims in the conflict areas. The victims were not only policemen and soldiers but

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depended on its size of each village; 200,000 baht for small village, 250,000 baht for medium village, and 300,000 baht for large village.

also village chiefs, bureaucrats, judges, Buddhist monks, civilians, and even school teachers and students. The senseless and vicious killings threatened the life and everyday activities of southern people and marked a renewed campaign of terror by insurgents groups, which one not seen in Thailand for over 30 years (Albritton 2005: 166).

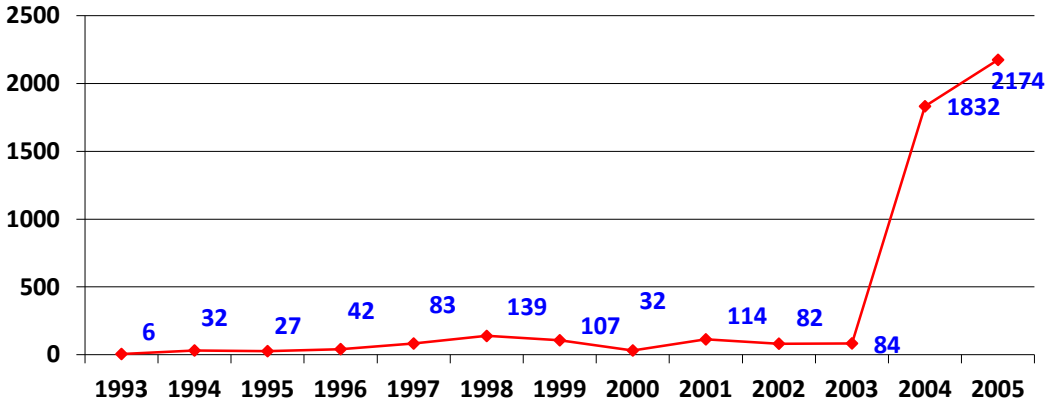
Even though the violence reappeared during the period of the Thaksin government, many academics believed that the re-emergence of violence in the Thai south in 2004 was multifaceted, ranging from a set of long-term social, economic, and political grievances, including cultural, religious, and linguistic marginalization of the southern Muslim minority by the hegemonic Thai Buddhist state, discrimination against the Malay-Muslims in education and employment, mistreatment by local Thai government officials, especially the police and military, and a deficiency in economic development of the Malay-Muslim provinces, which were among the poorest provinces in Thailand, (International Crisis Group 2005: 1, Melvin 2007 and Askew 2010), rather than one leader who caused the problems.

However, it is undeniable that Thaksin's decision to handle the South's problem with the use of violence and neglecting the softer methods such as discussions and negotiations was one of the major factors that aggravated the situation. There have been calls for peaceful solutions by academics, the National Human Right Commission, and even the King Rama IX, Bhumibol Adulyadej, who suggested an approach to Thaksin in solving the southern crisis on 24 February 2004 by "understanding (*khao jai*), reaching out (*khao theung*), and developing (*pattana*)" (McCargo 2005: 500). Thaksin's ruthless policy during 2004 – 2006, instead of diminishing the unrest, widened distrust and discrimination among Thais and non-Thais and polarized society by creating a climate of mutual distrust and suspicion between Muslim and Buddhist communities, as it provoked more violence and conflict in the Thai South (Liow 2007, McCargo 2007, Ukrist 2007, Storey 2007, Ockey 2008, and Askew 2010).

Consequently, the violent attacks[28] rapidly increased from only 84 in 2003 to 1,838 in 2004 and 2,173 in 2005 as illustrated in

Figure 1-3

Figure 1-3: Violent attacks in southernmost provinces of Thailand during 1993-2005



Source: Deep South Incident Database (DSID), Deep South Watch (DSW), Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand

Even though the conflict and violence in southern Thailand does manifest as local-ethnic-issue-caused-violence rather than as Islamic terrorism or a broader religious movement, as the conflict and violence occur in Muslim-dominated areas, it is undeniable that the influence of Islam which is passed along by either traditional and local religious persons or by online channels of communication in a contemporary society has connected Muslims in the country to Muslims in other parts of the world community and allowed them to share their feelings and experiences.

[28] To be noted that the number of violent attacks possibly included the non-separatism-motivated incidents. The killings could be from personal disputes which could lead to misleading data. Moreover, the data on numbers of violent attacks could be different depending on sources. However, the sudden increase of violent attacks in southern Thailand after 2004 was still dramatically high.

Due to technology that connects the world together, people from every part of the world where internet can be reached, are easily connected and can feel linked to the same situation even though they do not have anything physically related to that place. Likewise, feelings of sympathy among the Muslims in southern Thailand for their fellow Muslims who are persecuted and suffer from unjust treatment may contribute to the violent forms of participation against their own state. The sharing of emotions among fellow Muslims has increased over the last two decades due to the reach of communication technology combined with the alienation of the Malay-Muslim in southern Thailand that has lasted for over a century may have contributed to Malay Muslims militancy against the Thai state. In sharing the same ideas of Islam and having sympathy for Muslim brotherhood, several separatist organizations in southern Thailand gained support either financial or training from the Muslim world in the Middle East and Malaysia and some groups are influenced by the Muslim movements in other parts of the world (Dorairajoo 2004, Ukrist 2007, and Wattana 2007). As Ukrist Patthamanand (2007: 77) explained, the insurgents had been consolidating their forces and training militia under an administrative and military structure. They had prepared a seven-step plan[29], leading to the overthrow of the Thai state in the area, and the 28 April attack was believed to be in the seven-step plan. He illustrated that the insurgents aim at invoking a psychological effect and he believed that the operation could link to and be cooperated with the terrorist movements outside the country.

[29] The document about a seven-step plan was found by Thai officers at a Muslim teacher's home in Narathiwat. The seven-step plan were 1) raise awareness of Malay ethnicity and independent Patani kingdom 2) expand the members to maximum 300,000 members 3) create an organization to support its activities 4) select youths and train them for fighters 5) build up nationalistic ideology 6) prepare for the revolution and 7) start revolution. See Rung Kaewdang, *War and Peace at Southern Border*, (King Prajadhipok's Institute: Bangkok, 2007), p. 145-150 or Samret Srirai, *BRN-COORDINATE and Violence in the Three Southern Border Provinces and Four Districts in Songkhla between 2004-2007 and Strategies to End Violence* [in Thai], (Thai National Defence College: Bangkok, 2007), p. 64-67.

Although the government first refused to accept that there was external influence, they, later, admitted that influence from the teachings of external Islamic movements had been involved and explicitly recognized this in the 28 April attack. Therefore, Thai governments pressed to eliminate these separatist militants by strengthening the capacity of military and intelligence forces. Some of the separatists were killed; some of them surrendered; some of them fled to Malaysia and other countries. However, violent activities still continue and the violent unrest is now considered as an "insurgency" or "separatist insurgency" (Askew 2010: 118).

Since September 11, 2011, or the 9/11 attack, the perception towards the Malays has worsened. Domestic and international propaganda put a stamp of "terrorist" on the Muslims around the world, including in Thailand. Collective recognition about the history of Malay-Muslim separatism in southern Thailand and the global propaganda of Islamic terrorists has faultily shaped the perception of Thai-Buddhists towards Malay-Muslims as potential separatists who are un-Thai and create trouble and violence that powerfully threaten the national security of the Thai nation state (Dorairojoo 2004: 466). Conversely, the cumulative narrative about the history of assaults against the local Malay-Muslims by Thai officials and security forces and the current bloodshed against Muslims in other countries around the world has agitated and brought together more support from Muslims for the new groups advocating radical Islamic separatism recently found in southern Thailand.

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, although Islamic consciousness and a sense of sharing and unity with their Muslim brotherhood can possibly convert people to militancy, the conflict and violence in southern Thailand cannot be simply viewed and analyzed only as a religious movement or Islamic terrorism or a single-factor-caused problem. The current violence is rather a multifaceted problem driven by local issues stemming from historical grievances, ethnic and religious discrimination, unjust and inhuman practices by Thai

officers, and socioeconomic unfairness, as well as the deficiency to generate truly participatory and representative structures that have never been effectively resolved yet created more violence in the problem area which threatened the Thai state's authority for almost a century.

The return of military-led control

The high degree of corruption, the inability to deal with the insurgency in the South, the weakening of democracy and royal authority, and the divisions within the military led to the decision of the military leaders to remove Thaksin from power (Ockey 2007: 138). The coup, led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, the first Muslim[30] army commander and the leader of the Council for National Security, was successfully seized power from the Thaksin government on 19 September 2006. Even though the coup satisfied most people, in particular the anti-Thaksin demonstrators, as it ended the period of political unrest, the coup illustrated a setback for democracy in Thailand and brought back the country to military regime for the first time in fifteen years. (Ockey 2007: 133).

After Prime Minister Thaksin was overthrown by the 2006 coup d'état, Thailand was governed by the military government first led by General Sondhi Boonyaratglin, and then the junta-appointed Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanond. The unrest in the southern border provinces continued. However, there were expectations that the Surayud government would better deal with the conflict and violence than the Thaksin government which, many Thais believed, was "too intractable and too hated to resolve the conflict" (Ockey 2007: 140).

The military government tried to cope with the southern conflict by focusing on both reconciliation and the rule of law. General Surayud's government re-established the SBPAC and the Civilian-Police-Military command, which were both abolished during the Thaksin government. However, the SBPAC was revived this time as a civilian organization of bureaucrats under the Ministry of Interior comprising many locals on the board committee. It emphasized development activities, preserving the rights and seeking justice for local people, creating good relationships between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai state, and security

[30] General Sonthi Boonyaratglin is the Muslim from central region of Thailand, not an ethnic Malay.

planning[31]. In addition, a new army-dominated Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) Region 4 Forward Command has been added to manage the southern crisis (Askew 2010: 136).

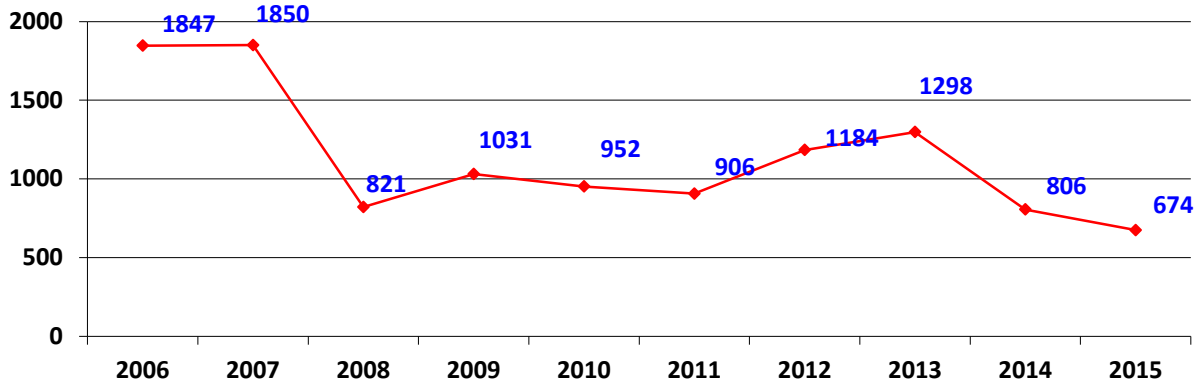
A month after Surayud became the 24th prime minister of Thailand, he visited the lower South and publicly apologized to the Malay-Muslims for the mistakes that the previous government made and for the many deaths of Malay-Muslim people in the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents. This was the first time since the series of disturbances began in 2004 that the leader of the country came out and acknowledged government mistakes. His public statement admitting that the Thai government made mistakes was a good sign of the Surayud government dealing with the conflict with more concern and understanding. The Surayud government assigned the National Legislative Assembly (NLA), which was established in October 2006, to set up a special committee in order to investigate and study the conflict and disturbances in the three southernmost provinces. A year later, a 105 page report was submitted to the government. According to the report, the violence was mainly caused by insufficiency of government security policies, and inadequate implementation in which justice and peaceful methods were not being fully applied by the state (Askew 2010: 138).

From late 2006, pacifying words, such as "peaceful means", "justice", and "participation", could be seen more often in government strategies toward the southern conflict. The following prime ministers Samak Sundaravej and Somchai Wongsawat, both under the Palang Prachachon (People's Power) Party and successors of the Thaksin regime, continued this compromise approach. The success of this approach showed in the decrease in violent attacks in 2008, with the violent attacks dropping dramatically from around 1,850 attacks in 2007 to only 821 in 2008 as demonstrated in Figure 1-4. The duo strategies of

[31] For more details on the history and missions of the SBPAC (in Thai), see 'Prawat kwampenma' [The history], <http://www.sbpac.go.th/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1& Itemid=487&lang=en>, accessed 20 April 2014.

conciliation and detention seemed to be able to weaken the ability and support of the insurgents, the attacks continued on a small scale though (Ockey 2008: 125).

Figure 1-4: Violent attacks in southernmost provinces of Thailand during 2006-2015



Source: Deep South Incident Database (DSID), Deep South Watch (DSW), Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand

The Democrat government, led by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (in office during 2008-2011), applied the concept "Politics leading Military Force" which was first used during the General Prem administration in the 1980s. However, the Abhisit government's approach in solving the southern conflict was not much different from former governments. His strategy focused on development and justice. He continued funding several development programs in which the government dumped 63 billion baht into the conflict area over three years of his term. The SBPAC has been empowered to function independently and report directly to the Prime Minister. During this period, the idea of elective self-government in the three southernmost provinces, known as Nakorn Pattani, was proposed by General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, former prime minister, but Abhisit immediately disagreed claiming it would create more confusion and conflict and that Chavalit's proposal of Nakorn Pattani aimed to enhance his personal political interests rather than the benefit of the nation (*Thairath* 5

November 2009: 15). However, even though the Democrat party had been popular in the broader south for many years and there were some expectations of improved performance in dealing with the southern conflict, Prime Minister Abhisit disappointed voters as there still was nothing that could be assessed as concrete solutions to the problems during his period.

The government of Yingluck Shinnawatra had not developed any proven effective policy in tackling the problem, whereas the insurgents have developed their operations to be more professional and well planned. During her electoral campaign, she promised to initiate new policies for the south, including enhancing public input in decision-making processes and launching a special administrative zone. However, these advertised policies were not implemented after she won the 2011 national election. Another challenge is the disagreement between the government and the military in counter-insurgency policies. Yingluck knew that the military was backing the opposition and challenging the army would affect her position in a negative way. Therefore, the southern crisis nowadays is left in the hands of the army under the operation of ISOC Region 4 Forward Command, so that elected governments have limited input.

Under the Yingluck government, a first round of peace talks were held in March 2013 in Malaysia with representatives of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (National Revolutionary Front or BRN), one of the biggest, yet diverse, southern rebel groups. This did demonstrate a big step forward in an attempt to lessen the conflict. Even though there were secretly talks between the Thai state and the separatist groups, this was the first time of the open talk that officially discovered to the public. However, there are suspicions from people, academics, civil society, and the military about the inability of the BRN and its representatives in negotiating and controlling other insurgent groups. Although the peace talk is considered as an improvement towards the conflict resolutions, the violence continued and even increased in 2013, as shown in Figure 1-4,

Due to the political unrest in Bangkok since November 2013, the fourth round of talks planned for December 2013 where hopefully more rebel groups would join the discussions had to be postponed. The Yingluck government was overthrown in May 2014 by a military coup led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha, the Royal Thai Army (RTA) Commander. He, then, established the National Peace and Order Maintaining Council (NPOMC). The name was later changed to "National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) to rule the country under the military-led government. General Prayuth announced that he will adopt the King's advice to "understand, reach out, and develop", continue the policy "politics leading military", and work on the process of peace talks, but talking about a self-administered zone is prohibited, in order to deal with the conflict and violence in the southern border province[32]. However, there are concerns by politicians, academics and civil society groups that the total military control in the troubled south and leaving aside civil society, democracy, and popular participation would be a big mistake in tackling the complicated crisis in southern Thailand[33].

The conflict and violence in the Malay-Muslim provinces has existed for longer than the oldest living people in the South and become a fact of life for people in the conflict area. In the past, the conflict and violence occurred as a consequence from other factors such as the history of forceful annexation of Patani kingdom under Siam, the assimilation policies that abandoned Malay culture and Islamic practices, and the unjust treatments of the Thai state officials towards the Malay-Muslims. Nowadays, since the conflict and violence existed for very long time, it becomes a cause of other things, not a consequence. After the rise in conflict in 2004, the Thai state used different tactics to curb the violence. However, most

[32] "NCPO Still Working on Peace Talks for the Deep South," *The Government Public Relations Department*, 8 July 2014 <http://thailand.prd.go.th/view_news.php?id=7323&a=2>, accessed 12 August 2014.

[33] "The NCPO finally decides to take on the South and its insurgency problems," *The Nation*, 26 June 2014 <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/The-NCPO-finally-decides-to-take-on-the-South-and--30237123.html>, accessed 12 August 2014.

tactics aimed to increase utmost power of state by increasing the state interference at local levels and impeding the pathways to participation of the locals.

Despite the increasing conflict and state control, that existing conflict rose to a new level in 2004, sparking a desire to participate. According to Marc Askew (2010: 147-148), the local Malay-Muslims, whom he spoke to, recently show less interest about the conflict in the past and the concept of Malay-Muslim identity. However, it does not mean that they do not care about the conflict at their hometown but it possibly means that they look forward to the peaceful solutions through the desire for participation within the Thai state. If that desire is blocked, more conflict will be likely to ensue.

Research questions

The national policies toward the conflict in the South to date have never been effective enough to solve the ongoing violence. One of the most important issues yet overlooked is political participation of people in the conflict area. However, although people desire to participate in politics, being involved in political activities in the conflict areas does not always come as smoothly as desired and sometimes can cause more tensions and endangerment to and among them. Therefore, making decision towards political participation always comes to the situation that people have to choose between taking risks of personal security by participating in politics and disassociating from politics to make their lives safer from being suspected by both sides and pray for the situation to be better one day.

Many factors and players such as state, insurgents, interest groups, civil society, local authorities, and people together have important roles in shaping the path of political participation. As Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson (2009: 94) mentioned, "the greater the level of participation by all political communities and domestic constituencies, the higher

the likelihood that certain problems can be alleviated before they turn into serious and irresolvable conflict." Especially during the democratic era, it seems like political participation really matters in a way to draw opinions and allow people to express and contribute greatly to create peace in their own communities. Therefore, due to concerns of the importance of political participation in the conflict area, this research would like to study and examine these following questions;

1. Why do/don't people in the conflict area participate in the election?
2. How do people in the conflict, less conflict, and non-conflict areas participate in politics?
3. How does the government play its role in the area of political participation during the conflict?
4. How does civil society in the South act politically?
5. How does the ongoing conflict impact on political participation?
6. How does political participation affect the conflict?

Scope of the study

There has been considerable speculation as to why most of the people living in the midst of longstanding conflict and violence in southernmost Thailand want to participate in politics rather than ignore it or join the rebels. To find the answer, this research will focus on political participation of people who are directly affected by the violence in the South. The research will focus on the period since 2001 which was the year that ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose policy was considered as one of the important reasons for the flare up in violence, won the national election and came to power until the present period. Moreover, the research will pay attention not only to the national and local elections but also the non-electoral modes of participation of local people during that period and assess whether

or not the seemingly endless crisis of violence in Southern Thailand affected people's political behavior.

Therefore, the research will seek to examine how and why Malay-Muslim people participate in politics, as well as, the governmental response to the political activities of southern people in the conflict area. Following this, the paper will explore whether conflict experiences result in changes in the level of political participation or not by comparing between non violence, less violence, and high violence conflict areas of Songhla and Pattani.

Significance of the issue

In the past decade, the violence of Thailand's three southernmost provinces, plus four districts of Songkhla, has become a significant concern of the Thai government and has drawn international attention. The Southern people have been faced with political violence in which rebels have been fighting Thai authorities on and off for many years. Presently, daily killings of local policemen, soldiers, religious leaders, and other civilians, bombing and torching of schools, temples, official places, markets, shops, and even people's homes marked a new level of insurgency and violence, one not seen in over 30 years, and currently southern Thailand has become the most violent region in Southeast Asia where the Malay-Muslims have suffered the most from the ongoing ethnic conflict. Not only the local Malay-Muslims but Thai-Buddhists residing in the area are suffering from pain and loss of their loved ones. They, whichever religion or ethnicity they are, have to live in danger and in fear of being targets and victims. While the Thai-Buddhists are fearful of being targets of the Malay-Muslim militants, the Malay-Muslims are fearful of being suspects of the Thai military.

The crisis has also destroyed the economic, social, and even education system in the conflicted area. The government has to spend much more of its budget for domestic security; local income has been decreasing because of diminishing numbers of tourists and reduced revenue from rubber plantations which are the main sources of income for the South; children cannot go to school safely and many schools have been attacked by unidentified groups. Even today the violence in these three southern provinces is largely unpredictable and considered as "the single most aggressive challenge that southern Thai Malay-Muslims have issued to the sovereign Thai nation-state" (Dorairajoo 2009: 70).

Also, the violence has widened distrust and discrimination among Thais and non-Thais and polarized society by creating a climate of mutual distrust and suspicion between Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist communities (Liow 2007: 15) in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. The effects of the conflict in these provinces, besides damaging national security, economics, the country's reputation and the social life of local people, has also affected the international relations between Thailand and neighboring Malaysia, Indonesia, the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN), the Organization of Islamic Countries, and the broader Muslim world. Furthermore, there are worries, not only for the Thai government but also among neighboring countries, that the grievances of the Muslims in southern Thailand may bring support from Muslim terrorist organizations or jihadist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyh (JI) and Al-Qaeda to fight against the Thai state, which could possibly expand the situation so that the Malay-Muslim insurgency could make Thailand the next front in the war on terrorism in Southeast Asia. However, there is little evidence to prove any linkages between the Malay-Muslim insurgency in Thailand and international terrorist organizations to date.

Therefore, the Southern violence currently is not only a concern for the Thai government and local people, it has also been closely observed and watched by the national and international media, national-level policy makers, and academia, as well as national and international organizations including Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), human rights and humanitarian organizations, and social development organizations. Many representatives have come to the three southern provinces to work in response to the crisis and sort out the possible solutions to stop the crisis. However, although there have been many attempts from many experts in studying the causes and patterns of the violence as well as searching for the best solution, the possible ways to end the violence have been difficult to discover. So, this research is conducted with the aim to offer an alternative way of considering the problem by emphasizing the governmental and non-governmental actors and how they can support each other in solving the problem through political participation.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review and Research Methodology

Political participation

Concept and definition

The definition of political participation varies among scholars and can mean different things to different people. Traditionally, the definitions of political participation focused on any political activities that intend to influence government policies (Traut and Emmert 1993: 239). Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-On Kim (1978:46) defined political participation as "those legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or actions that they take." While Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) limited political participation to only legal activities, the term political participation can be considered in a broader aspect. It can mean "any activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision-making" (Huntington and Nelson 1976: 4). Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson (1976: 4-7) included both legal and illegal acts whose goal is to influence government behavior, ranging from voting, demonstration, protest, riot, to insurgent violence, into their definition of political participation.

Later, the description of political participation is expanded and not restricted to only political acts but also includes non-political forms of activity such as being members or participating in civic and religious groups, or educational and work-related organizations. Involvement in such activities is important not only for strengthening civil society but also bolstering political participation (Prinat 2002: 32). The occurrence of participation is not only a self-motivated effort but also requires motivations and interactions among citizens, interest

groups, political parties, and government elites. Steven Rosenstone and John Hansen (1993: 228) defined participation as “the the product of strategic interaction of citizens and leaders". Similar to Rosenstone and Hansen’s definition, Prinat Apirat (2002: 33) perceived the role of political participation as the channel for the exchange of ideas in a two-way communication system which provides the linkage of conversation between citizens and their representatives or the state.

Political participation can refer to many activities, legal and illegal, electoral and non-electoral activities, all of these forms of participation can be recognized as means for influencing public policy. As Verba and Nie (1972: 4) mentioned, “Participation is not committed to any social goals but is a technique for setting goals, choosing priorities, and deciding what resources to commit to goal attainment.” Also, participation is essential for civilized behavior to express different views nonviolently through dialogue where differences are discussed and compromised (Belloni 2001: 168). James Ockey (2008, 153-154) remarks in his work regarding the relationship between political participation and political integration that although participation can lead to discussions of alternatives that some consider an unpleasant resolution, “it is, and has long been, an effective means of integrating the [southern] region into the national polity.”

Therefore, the exchange of opinions and discussions among citizens and between them and the state as well as popular engagement in politics is necessary to generate meaningful political participation. Participation leaves political outcomes in the hands of the citizenry by providing the citizens more control over political activities and increasing public pressure on political elites. When there are greater demands for participation, rather than considering democracy may be at risk, the increase of citizen participation brings an opportunity to enrich meaningful changes to the society (Dalton 2008: 94).

Political participation can be broadly defined to include any activities that intend to affect public policies. However, for the aim of comprehensive analysis and clarity, the term political participation in this thesis will refer to both electoral and non-electoral forms of participation and exclude non-political forms of participation such as memberships in civil groups or work-related organizations. When talking about political participation, it means those political actions undertaken by ordinary citizens, both individual and collective, that are intended either directly to affect governmental decision-making of public policy or indirectly to influence the selection of government personnel.

Factors influencing political participation

There are many factors influencing political participation. Numerous studies on political participation accept and document one of the well-known studies called "resource model" or "standard SES model" (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This model talks about the effects of socioeconomic status (SES) on political participation behavior and explains that the SES is the major influencing factor that affects level of participation (Verba and Nie 1972, Verba et al., 1995). According to this principle, there is a relationship to a large extent between political participation and individuals' resources, including social status, education, occupation, and income. Sidney Verba, Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995: 3) stated that "those who wish to take part must also have the resources that provide the wherewithal to participate." The SES facilitates individuals in gaining civic skills and knowledge and promoting positive attitudes and participatory norms that lead to an effort to influence the government and political system (Traut and Emmert 1993: 241). Therefore, individuals with high socioeconomic status or individuals' resources are more likely to participate in politics than individuals with low levels of socioeconomic status.

However, focusing only on socioeconomic status is criticized by many academics who claim that it is not enough to analyze patterns and motivations of people in engaging in politics (Nelson 1979, Leighley 1995, Albritton and Denton 2008). Jan E. Leighley (1995: 183-184), conducted research on political participation, comments that besides examination of individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, multivariate analyses, including individual's political attitudes and political mobilization, across demographic groups should be added to the study in order to develop a better understanding of who participates and why.

Another model called a "life-cycle" model (Milbrath 1965, Glenn and Grimes 1968, Nie, Verba, and Kim 1974, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Jennings and Markus 1988) indicates that there is a relationship between age and level of political participation. Political participation generally increases with age, but with the young and the old less likely to engage in the community. According to Lester Milbrath (1965: 134), "Participation rises gradually with age, reaches its peak and levels off in the forties and fifties, and gradually declines above sixty." So, from this theory, the middle age group is most likely to be active politically.

Additionally, personal attitude and personality is important to the level of political participation (Mussen and Wyszynski 1952, Milbrath and Klein 1962, Nelson 1979, and Kundu 1994). There are numerous studies looked at the association between attitude and personality and political participation in various ways since there are many diverse personality traits. For Dale Nelson (1979: 1027), people who participate in politics would have a general interest in politics, an understanding of political issues, and a preference to discuss or talk about politics with others. The work of Sima Kundu (1994), which examined the personalities of Indian people, found that people with high self-esteem are more likely to engage in political activities. Lester Milbrath and Walter Klein (1962) noticed that sociable individuals tend to participate in politics more than those with unsociability. However, all of

these studies have one common factor that people's attitude and personality have a great influence on political behavior.

Personal trust towards the political system and political authorities and a belief in their effectiveness to solve problems also affect levels of political participation. Individuals who have high levels of trust tend to engage less in political activities because they perceive political authorities as problem solvers and believe the community is in the good hands of trusted officials. They, then, feel little need to engage in politics or influence decision makers (Nelson 1979: 1027).

For some citizens, political participation, particularly participation through elections, is a civic duty (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Chareka, Sears, and Chakera 2006, and Weinschenk 2014). As Raymond Wolfinger and Stephen Resenstone (1980: 7-8) described, "the most important benefit of voting [is]… a feeling that one has done one's duty to society…and to oneself." Citizen duty is thus notably related to electoral participation. However, if one is not satisfied with the current government, they wait for several years to vote again. Engaged citizens, who have self-expressive norms, are more participatory. They look for more direct ways of influencing policy makers, such as boycotts, protest, and other forms of political action. So, duty-based participation may encourage voter turnout but self-expressive norms of engaged citizens can also stimulate political engagement in other forms of political actions that are broader than electoral politics (Dalton 2008: 85-86).

Several studies also identified ethnicity as an important source of political participation (Wilson and Banfield 1971, Greeley 1974, Nelson 1979, Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981, Lien 1994, Wrinkle et.al 1996, and Albritton and Denton 2008). As Andrew M. Greeley (1974: 170) mentioned, "Religioethnic background is a meaningful predictor of political participation (in American society)". Even though evidence regarding ethnic-related factors vary depending on the exact mode of participation and period of

research time, the impact of ethnicity has a greater effect even than the SES, on the differences in levels of participation (Nelson 1979: 1024). In general, Wrinkle et. al (1996: 144) believed "the greater the connection of an individual with his or her fellow ethnics, the more likely he or she will be to be engaged in non-electoral political participation." Similar to the study on political participation in southern Thailand, Albritton and Denton (2008) found that it is not only socioeconomic status that shapes political participation, cultural or ethnic identifications also seem to influence political participation to some significant degree. Nevertheless, rather than the ethnic background and a sense of shared identity, the feelings of power deprivation and thoughts of inequality and unfairness in the social and political system also mobilize political action and participation as a response to feelings of political disaffection (Miller et al. 1981: 508).

Among these factors mentioned earlier, people's experiences of conflict and violence also affect the level of political participation; experiences of conflict and violence lead to greater collective action (Wood 2003, Bellows and Miguel 2006, Blattman 2009, and Shewfelt 2009). John Bellows and Edward Miguel (2006) examined conflict in Sierra Leone and found that people who experienced family deaths and displacement increased their political awareness and participation. They were more likely to attend community meetings, join political groups, and vote. Also, Chris Blattman (2009) demonstrated a causal link from conflict and violence to political engagement in Uganda. Victims of conflict are more likely to participate socially. They are more likely to vote and lead their communities (Blattman 2009: 231). However, Susan Gluck Mezey (1975: 508) argued regarding the relationships between personal experience and political participation that political activities and attitudes are not "the immediate results of the individual's primary experiences, but are likely to be modified by other influences which arise at later stages in the individual's career." According to Mezey (1975), unfavorable changes in current political events can bring about political

reactions from certain individuals, who may or may not have experiences or interests in political activities.

From the literature on factors influencing political participation discussed above, the analyses on the correlations between political participation and these factors, including the SES, ages, personal attitudes, personality traits, personal trust, citizenship norms, ethnicity, and conflict experience, are multivariate and complex, depending on various motivations, the period and place of research, and modes of participation. Therefore, this thesis intends to do a multifaceted analysis to test the relationship between political participation and the conflict in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

Modes of political participation

As Lester W. Milbrath (1965: 2) mentioned, people can relate to their political system in a variety of ways to meet their different demands and objectives. Some persons participate in politics to achieve their personal goals; others participate in the politics because they want to improve it. Rather than just participation in free and fair elections, people participate in different political activities with different levels of participation over time. These differences in types and levels of political participation signify variations in which citizens try to influence government (Hirlinger 1992: 553). Therefore, alternative modes of political participation are also essential and deserve attention. Political participation can be, and should be, considered much more broadly as multidimensional activities including both electoral and non-electoral forms of participation (Verba and Nie 1972, Bobo and Gilliam 1990, and Dalton 2008).

Huntington and Nelson (1976) categorized political participation into five categories First, *electoral activities* which include election-related activities such as voting, making campaign contributions, and participating in political party activities. Second, *lobbying* which means individual and/or collective attempts to pressure government leaders on issues that affect a large number of people. Third, *organizational activity* which represents the activity of participating in an organization with the aim to influence government decision making. Fourth is *contacting government officials* which differs from lobbying in which contacting government officials aims to profit only one person or a small group of people. Fifth, *committing acts of violence* which means the use of physical violence against people and/or property in order to influence government decision-making.

Verba, Nie, and Barbic (1973: 237) clustered political participation into four broad "modes of activity", excluding violent activity from their list. The four different modes are 1) *voting*, 2) *campaign activity* such as fund-raising, campaigning about political issues, or signing petitions about particular issues, 3) *communal activity* which refers to non-electoral activity by which individuals or groups of people try to influence community policies with the aims of contributing to the public good, and 4) *particularized contacting*, the act of contacting a government official by an individual to deal with a particular problem affecting only herself/himself or her/his family and aiming at narrow outcomes related only to the respondent or his family.

Based on clusters of participation classified by Huntington and Nelson (1976) and Verba, Nie, and Barbic (1973), this research will examine political participation in three channels; 1) *political participation through election* which includes voting and campaign activity, 2) *political participation through the state* which comprises contacting government officials and particularized contacting, and 3) *political participation through civil society* which involves organizational and communal activity.

1) Political participation through elections

Political participation through elections can be considered as the most basic and simplest form of political participation that does not require a lot of initiative and has a fairly low opportunity cost (Prinat 2002: 38). Elections, as mentioned by Russell Dalton (2008: 94), are "the source of democratic legitimacy, and they are a simple means of engaging the mass public in the democratic process." Moreover, elections can also be regarded as the safest means of political activity in generating a connection between the state and its citizens and allowing citizens to convey their opinions and preferences for society through their selection of elected representatives whom they believe can represent citizens' interests and influence the government's policies (Prinat 2002: 49). Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978: 53) viewed elections as a unique and influential mechanism that allows citizens to have their chances to pressure and control their government.

However, Max Kaase and Alan A. Marsh (1979) perceived voting in a different way. They argued that voting is distinct from conventional political participation. According to Kaase and Marsh (1979: 86), "voting is a unique form of political behavior in the sense that it occurs only rarely, is highly biased by strong mechanisms of social control, is accompanied by rain-dance ritual of campaigning and does not involve the voter in major informational or other costs." Similar to Kaase and Marsh, Dalton (2008: 85) agreed that elections are not only sporadic events but also quite inactive means of political influence. Moreover, voters have no guarantee that policies presented during election campaign will be followed by the elected government after they won an election. In addition, elections can be corrupted by fear (such as intimidation or threats of violence), corruption (such as vote buying), and fraud (such as miscounting of votes) (Sutter 2003: 435). Corrupt elections can damage voters' confidence in

the political system and democracy and turn them to the use of violence as another way to preserve their political interests.

Individuals decide to participate through voting as it is the simplest way to take part in politics. However, elections are passive and irregular actions and may be undermined by corruption, or limited choices. So, people, especially those who become more educated and politically skilled, try to find different methods of participation that can increase potential power of the citizenry and give them more direct ways to influence public policy (Dalton 2008: 85). Compared to non-electoral modes of participation, Dalton (2008: 93) said, "when participation expands beyond elections it allows citizens to select how and when they participate, since they do not have to wait until the next election to be active." There are various non-electoral methods of political participation that citizens can choose to serve their different objectives which will be discussed in the next section below, starting with political participation through the state.

2) Political participation through the state

In addition to participating through electoral channels, citizens also participate by contacting the state and its agencies. Alan Zuckerman and Darrell West (1985: 117) identified citizen contacting as "individuals who approach government officials or other powerful persons in order to obtain help for themselves, their families, associates, or larger social groups." This channel of participation needs much more initiative in determining the what, who, and how of the contacts than most other modes of political participation because citizens know what they want and contact the related officials to meet their desire (Verba and Nie 1972: 105). However, this citizen-initiated contacting can have as much influence on public policy as other political activities (Traut and Emmert 1993: 251).

According to Verba and Nie (1972), there are two types of citizen contacting depending on matters of concern. One is particularized referent contacting, which relates to matters of narrow concern just to themselves or their families. Examples of particularized referent contacting through the state and its arms are plentiful. People may contact the state and its agencies to seek governmental assistance for different purposes, for example, unemployed people searching for a job, working people looking for social security, farmers seeking agricultural insurance programs, or parents finding student loans for their children. Another is general referent contacting or social referent contacting, which involves matters of broad concern to larger groups, neighborhoods, or communities. This type of citizen contacting engages public problems or concerns that affect large sections of society (Verba and Nie 1972: 66). Individuals who are general or social referent contactors are thus more likely to be more civic-oriented and have higher socioeconomic status than the former group (Traut and Emmert 1993: 239).

Besides contacting state officials, people can also contact politicians directly or through their political party offices. According to Jacob Aars and Kristin StrØmsnes (2007: 93), "Citizens-initiated contact with politicians is an increasing, but often neglected, form of political participation." Contacting politicians is more common in small communities because people have a better knowledge of their local affairs and their elected representatives (Aars and StrØmsnes 2007: 113). However, interaction between citizens and politicians and/or elected officials may be mostly limited to voting in elections or to the campaign period which does not provide sufficient opportunities for people to meet their demands (Prinat 2002: 32). Thus, political participation through state channels can open more chances for people to convey their interest between election periods.

Although the state can act as one of the channels of political participation, simultaneously, the level and form of political participation can also be confined by the state and its prevailing strategies applied by its political elites (Vráblíková 2010: 1-2). Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Marco G. Giugni (1995: 45) mentioned that the openness of political participation is a function of the state. Due to the existence of various interests from different groups, the state needs to regulate those interests and keep the balance at a certain level. The principles of legitimacy and non-discrimination must be applied in order to prevent state policies and public interests from being dominated by a few strong political actors. If government performs in a way that is unfavorable or biased to any group, those citizens may be more likely to ignore participation through the state (Hirlinger 1992: 554).

In a strong state with powerful centralized authority, the channels for popular involvement are limited and not institutionalized. This increases the cost of political participation which leads to a lower level of participation. Citizens will have to apply more expensive strategies, such as protests or demonstrations, to get involved in politics. If peaceful participation continues to be blocked by the state, it is likely that people will employ more violent means of participation (Kriesi et al. 1995: 45). Political support from the state is, thus, vital to stimulate conventional political participation. Unless the state provides proper support for civic participation, citizens may get involved with more violent activities that defy political authorities and the state. Nonetheless, if citizens do not perceive their rights and ability to develop their community, they might see no benefit to participation. Thus, if citizens' political attachment is weak, it is likely that they may withdraw from any types of political actions (Albritton and Denton 2008: 23-24). Therefore, the state should encourage citizens' political engagement at every stage of the decision-making process. Practices, such as public hearing, open discussion on public issues and other forms of participation, should

be arranged to create opportunities for different interest groups to express their demands and exchange information among groups and between the state and its citizens. Due to having different opinions from various groups, conflict of interests may occur. With such practices of civic participation and support by the state, conflict of interests can be harmonized and balanced.

By strong state, Joel S. Migdal (1988: 4-5) referred to a state that has high capacities to complete these following tasks; "*penetrate* society, *regulate* social relationships, *extract* resources, and *appropriate* or use resources in determined way". Besides having high capacity in dealing with the required socioeconomic tasks, Kreisi and his collaborators (1995: 33-34) explained further, a strong state always applies exclusive strategies, which are confrontational and polarizing. The strong state does not allow a high level of citizens' involvement in politics and does not facilitate proper channels to participate. By applying its exclusive strategies, the strong state can limit opportunities for participation as much as corrupt elections can. When citizens cannot expect a positive reaction from the state's political system, they find other ways to have their voices heard and that may lead to more costly and violent means of participation. As Carole Nagengast (1994: 115) argued, the state is often "the greatest instigator of cycles of violent human rights abuses as it seeks to suppress change and prevent opposition movements from undermining its legitimacy".

Participation through the state allows people to take their first step in contacting government authorities, including politicians, in various ways to meet different demands for either themselves or society. The state and its agencies are thus crucial actors of this mode of political participation that can control the effectiveness and reliability of this mean of participation. However, if the political acts cannot fulfill a citizen's purposes, he/she may find collective acts of participation as another means to pressure the government.

3) Political participation through civil society

Political participation through civil society refers to non-electoral acts of participation where individuals or groups of people participate in an organization or community activities with the aim to influence government decision making on community policies (Verba, Nie, and Barbic: 1973, and Huntington and Nelson: 1976). The concept of civil society is not new, but it came into renewed prominence in the 1980s after the collapse of communism and the expansion of democracy, speedy global inter-connection, and a significant increase of NGOs globally, as well as increasing emergence of armed intrastate and violent ethnic conflicts (Chandhoke 2007: 609). The study of civil society then became a center of attention for social science and political science scholars as it is thought to be an important component in advancing intra-state peace building processes (Edwards 2004: 2).

Ernest Gellner (1994) discussed civil society in terms of its relationship with the state. According to Gellner, civil society is:

> set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society. (5)

Similar to Gellner, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (1998: 3) perceived that although civil society is the sum of public will which acts independently, the role of civil society should not impede the performance of the state in carrying out responsibilities to its citizens. While civil society can counterbalance the state power, the state can also stipulate the agenda of civil society. As John Keane (1998: 5) mentioned, a contemporary civil society is "a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-governmental institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive, and

permanently in tension with each other and with state institutions that frame, constrict and enable their activities."

Generally speaking, civil society includes voluntary and non-profit organizations of many different kinds, humanitarian institutions, social and political movements, and other groupings of social participation and engagement, whose attempts are "to meet public goals for their members, or to gain collective goods or group benefits" (Spalding 1996: 69-70). Civil society is considered to be in a middle position between the public and the private. According to Helmut Anheier's (2000: 17) inclusive definition, civil society means "the set of institutions, organizations, and behaviors situated between the state, the business world, and the family."

With their networks and cooperation with local communities, civil society organizations can stimulate political participation by providing opportunities for association and raising awareness of shared problems in the community (Boulding 2010: 456). Participation in civil society organizations also increases citizens' political skills and thus facilitates participatory activities (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995: 309-310). Civil society, especially in the local community, is the place where people discuss and exchange their opinions about politics or issues of concern and it is the place where people's voices can be forwarded to political authorities. When citizens are more interested and experienced about politics, they are more likely to find a strong reason to participate in the political process. Civil society thus can put together social networks, locally, nationally, or even internationally, and enhance interpersonal trust among citizens as well as boost civic skills that contribute to political participation and collective actions and eventually create a 'good society', defined by Wallace and Pichler (2009: 255) as one in which "citizens engage in voluntary associations to foster democratic processes".

However, the probability and efficiency of political participation also depends significantly on the nature of civil society organizations and of their membership. Involvement with non-active and non-political organizations may not encourage political actions as well as those that have more active members and activities because those formal and active organizations can provide greater competence in developing civic skills that are essential to promote political participation (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995: 280-281).

Moreover, civil society can operate as an important bridge linking the state and citizens, representing members' interests and pushing forward the process of policy-making. Civil society, on the one hand, conveys messages from the government to their members and the public which promotes inter-understanding and communication between the state and its citizens. On the other hand, civil society organizations express their group interests to the state through various channels of political participation to ensure that their members' interests will be realized in public policies. Nonetheless, interests of each civil society organization can be various and contradictory. Besides, strong civil society organizations which have more financial support, better political skills, and stronger expression channels usually propose their group interests more powerfully and effectively than ordinary or weak organizations. Organizations, therefore, should follow laws and regulations, as well as collaborate and compromise, rather than compete against each other. The state, too, should treat them equally without any privilege through proper participation channels that are sufficient and accessible enough to make sure that various groups have fair opportunities to express their demands and participate in the decision-making process (Songyan 2005: 8-9).

There is an alternative perspective on state-civil society relations. Both state and civil society play important and complementary roles in society; however, they may perceive themselves as oppositional (Spalding 1996: 72). For the liberal model, civil society interacts with the state, not to threaten but, to improve the efficiency of the state's actions. Civil

society organizations provide support for the state in a variety of forms such as offering expert opinions or local wisdom, providing ground support when implementing policy, and observing the results of policies. Moreover, a strong civil society can provide "a base of legitimacy and a capacity for activity on which the state can build" (Spalding 1996: 66). The social integration of civil society in a locality, as Horstmann (2002: 145) stated, can "help stabilize the local state", whereas the extensive national networks of civil society can "help stimulate and reinforce the process of national integration."

For the radical model, civil society is an arena for independent political activity that is meant to oppose the role of the state and the domination of state elites (Carbone 2005: 169). From this point of view, civil society is a counter-weight to state power. The competence and activities of civil society, such as protecting human rights, offering channels of communication and participation, providing trainings for activists, and promoting pluralism, can improve the quality of governance and stabilize the government but at the cost of the empowerment of citizens and possibly the weakening of state power in the long run (Kalinowski 2009: 68). Even though civil society sometimes challenges state power, the process of public decision-making unavoidably involves civil society organizations one way or another as they have important roles in strengthening state-citizens relations and encouraging citizens' engagement in public interests. Therefore, the relationship between state and civil society can be considered as permanently in a state of flux depending on changing needs, policies, and preferences. The situation will rely on the attempts of actors in state and civil society to expand their scope of power or to protect their ability to function (Spalding 1996: 67).

In order to meet the ultimate objectives of the groups, the level of strength of civil society has to be taken into account. According to Migdal (1988: 33-41), civil society will be strong and effective, when it is headed by "strongmen" who can pursue their own goals in

opposition to the state and make state control very difficult. However, civil society organizations need to be aware that top-down planning that neglects members' interests often negates participation. The strength of civil society also highly depends on state policy. The state is considered to be the most critical actor in setting conditions and agendas for civil society (Chong and Elies 2011: 9). Moreover, the strength of civil society includes "relative autonomy from the state; ability to provide viable strategies of survival to members, and meet their cultural and symbolic needs, including financial and organizational resources; accountability; and members' support" (Spalding 1996: 70). Therefore, while "an expansive participant strong society makes political authority more accountable and reduces the scope for exclusionary politics and covert activity" (Cox 1999: 15), a weak civil society is unable to ensure government accountability or resist state domination.

Nonetheless, positive state – civil society relations are vital to create a harmonious society. With state power and support, civil society can establish the effectiveness of its organizations and create a smooth pathway for citizens' political participation. Civil society is even more significant for a divided society. Civil society as a public sphere between the state and the individual has a critical role in the initiation and long-term sustainability of the peace process by enhancing participation and promoting a foundation of democratization, the rule of law, and human rights (Belloni 2001). Robert Putnam (1993) perceived the important role of civil society in encouraging community engagement and in promoting the capability of government institutions and makes the political system function efficiently.

Although political participation through civil society can either support or slow down the work of the state, civil society is thought to be a key mechanism for social change through its functions of developing individuals' political skills, promoting political participation, and mediating between the state and its citizens.

These three modes of political participation have negative and positive sides as discussed above. However, political participation is important to the political system as an input channel of citizens' demands and proof of state legitimacy. The effectiveness of each mode of political participation thus depends not only on how many channels of participation the state provides but also how the state encourages and promotes political awareness of participation to its citizens. Without political awareness of citizens, political participation channels are worthless and without state responsiveness and responsibility to people's demand, political participation is meaningless too. As types and levels of political participation vary in each country and differ between times and situations, the next section will discuss political participation in Thailand in order to understand the Thai political system and how Thais participate. Then, the thesis will discuss more specifically political participation in the southernmost part of Thailand, where the conflict and violence occurs.

Political participation in the Thai context

Thailand is the country in Southeast Asia with the longest experience of independent and democratic rule (Freedman 2006: 29). Democracy in Thailand started more than 80 years ago after the overthrow of absolute monarchy in 1932 during the reign of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) with the hope for wider opportunities of popular involvement in politics. After the change of political system to constitutional monarchy under a parliamentary democratic system in 1932, the first constitution of Thailand was promulgated in 10 December 1932 and the first national elections were held a year after. It was an indirect vote in which the voters selected their representative from each *Tambon* (a sub-district) and the representatives from each sub-district voted for a Member of Parliament (MP). Subsequently, elections in Thailand changed to direct elections in which the voters directly elect their MPs. However, the leaders

of the coup did not give full political participation to Thai citizens in the beginning and claimed that Thai people were not ready yet for democracy (Saitip 1995: 199).

Under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram's dictatorship (during 1938-1944 and 1948-1957), political freedom of Thai citizens was limited, freedom of speech was banned and many people were arrested without trial, or assassinated, or disappeared. However, his authoritarian power collapsed in 1957 when Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat staged a coup and removed Phibun from power. Despite his participation with the students to discharge Phibun in the 1957 protest, the Sarit government (1958-1963) did not promote popular involvement of Thai citizens. On the contrary, his government was regarded as "the most repressive regime" (Ockey 2004: 13) since he suppressed most channels of political participation and the only and most powerful institution in Thai politics during that time was the army (Sudhamani 1978: 278). As a result, during this period, political activities by citizens rarely occurred. After Sarit's death in 1963, the authoritarian regime was continued by General Thanom Kittikachorn (1963-1973). Popular involvement was still limited and restrained for another ten years.

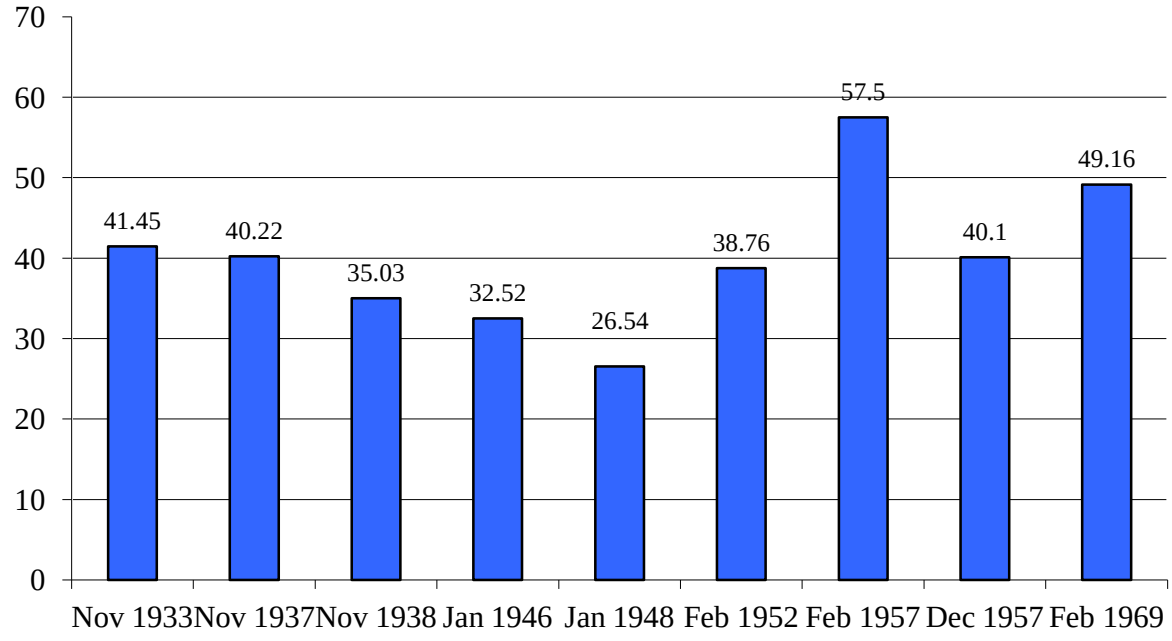
Under the military governments of Phibun, Sarit, and Thanom from 1938 to 1973[34], there were 35 years of political repression for Thai people. Popular participation was not promoted, but shunted aside by the state under the military regimes in order to strengthen military rule and prolong absolute power in Thai politics (Saitip 1995: 1999). Political freedom was strictly restrained under the enforcement of the Anti-Communist Law and the Law on Association that forbade any civil organizations engaging in any political activities. Movements and gatherings were disallowed and the media, including newspapers, radio, and television was under tight control of the military government. There were hundreds of people who were arrested, assassinated, or disappeared without trial (Boonsanong 1975: 190).

[34] There were civilian-led governments during 1938-1973 but there was no civilian-led governments lasted longer than 5 months.

Moreover, during this period, there was a big gap between the poor and the rich. The majority of Thai people, especially peasants and workers, were left in poverty, while the elites, both the military and the civil bureaucrats, as well as the privilege business groups, mostly Chinese merchants, became excessively wealthy. Due to the political and economic hardship under the military junta, the former group seemed to be "politically apathetic and subordinated" (Boonsanong 1975: 191-192).

As a result, Thai people were less likely to participate in political activities. This could be one of the reasons that voter turnouts in national elections between 1933 and 1969 were low and never exceeded 50 percent, except the election in February 1957, when voter turnout was as high as 57.50 percent (see Figure 2-1). However, the February 1957 general election was reported as a rigged election, and one of the reasons for the demonstrations in September 1957.

Figure 2-1: Voter turnout of national elections in Thailand from 1933 to 1969



Sources: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Among the 9 elections between 1933 and 1969, there was only the election in 1946, during the first term of Seni Pramoj, held under a democratic atmosphere. The other elections were held under military rule, to provide a façade of democracy for Thai people (Orathai 2002: 280). According to Orathai Kokpol (2002: 280), Thai politics repeated itself a vicious cycle:

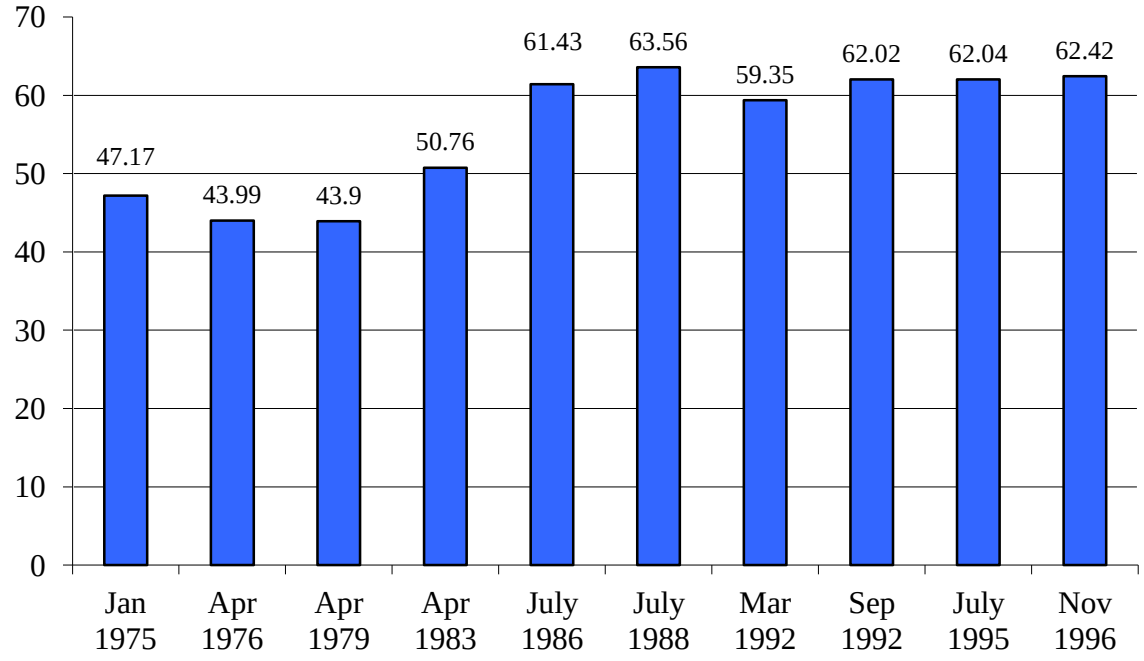
> First there was a coup in which the military took over, sometimes with a civilian prime minister as front man. Then a new constitution was promulgated and an election was held to legitimize the military leader and his government. Then another military faction staged a coup to alternate power in government.

Therefore, several elections in Thailand were held after military coups and new constitutions in order to legitimate the military governments and allow them to have their partisans in the parliament. Therefore, having elections during authoritarian regimes did not necessarily show democratization, as they were regarded as an instrument for the military junta to secure their positions (Che Man 2003: 3-4). The election results until 1975 were won by a government party because they were able to control the cabinet and the bureaucracy (Ockey 1994: 253). Non-electoral participation was still limited and constrained.

As mentioned by Kriesi et al. (1995: 45), when political participation is suppressed by the state, people, especially those who are educated and have high political awareness, tend to assume violent methods of participation. When channels of political participation were limited, some of Thai people decided to bypass channels to raise their voices by participating in communist movements, committing crimes, or protesting illegally and violently (Boonsanong 1975: 191). The student-led protests against the military regime in 1957 and 1973 confirm this statement.

After the military government was overthrown in 1973, the civilian-bureaucratic governments led by Sanya Dhammasak (1973-1975), Kukrit Pramoj (1975-1976), and Seni Pramoj (1976) ruled the country more democratically. During this period, though it lasted only three years, political participation blossomed and a wider variety of actors engaged in politics (Ockey 2004: 144). However, voter turnout never exceeded 50 percent until 1983 (see Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2: Voter turnout of national elections in Thailand from 1975 to 1996



Sources: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

After the short period of non-military led governments, variety of groups of people, mostly on the left, led by Thammasat university students gathered in 1976 to participate in the protest against the return of General Thanom. The Seni Promoj government splintered, and some, mostly ultra-rightists, decided to use violent methods to stop the uprising. Thus the 1976 protest led to the massacre of 6 October 1976 and became one of the most violent events in the history of Thailand.

Since the 1980s, the country had gradually moved forward to a somewhat more democratic regime and a desirable participatory atmosphere. Even though the prime ministers during the 1980s, General Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1988) and General Chartchai Chunhavan (1988-1991) had military background; they governed the country with more political openness. During the period of openness, political activities, including public debates and forums, demonstrations, and civil society organizations were thriving (Christensen 1991: 98). With the blooming of political participation and the popularity of General Prem, voter turnout was rapidly increasing from 50.76 percent to 61.43 percent in 1986 and remained over 60 percent for another 10 years until the 1996 general election, except in March 1992 when the country was under the military regime (see Figure 2-2).

After a 10-year-long parliamentary democratic regime and greater participatory condition, the improvement of democratization and political participation was interrupted and moved backward when Thailand experienced another coup in February 1991. After the decreasing influence of the military in Thai politics for the past 10 years, the coup demonstrated another attempt of the military to play a major role and to have influence in the government. The military junta, called National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC), seized power from the Chartchai government and claimed that the government had unbearable

corruption problems[35]. Under military rule, political freedom of Thai people was once again limited.

The NPKC appointed Anand Panyarachun, a civilian without military background, to be a prime minister. Even though governing under military guardianship, Prime Minister Anand was able to act quite independently from military demands and tried to promote the concepts of transparency and liberalism (Suchit 1992: 134). The coup replicated the vicious cycle of Thai politics by promulgating a new constitution and holding an election to perpetuate the coup group's domination. The national election in March 1992 was reported to have prevalent fraud and vote-buying. Unsurprisingly, the pro-military parties won this election.

However, this elected government under the military regime was not acceptable to the public. There was a protest in May 1992 to oust General Suchinda Kraprayool, the prime minister, from his position. Unlike the protests in 1957 and 1973 where the leading protestors were university students, the 1992 uprising was led by politicians, professional people, and the middle class. Due to the prevalent usage of mobile phones during the protest, this protest was also well-known as "the mobile phone mob". The bloody protests and the resignation of General Suchinda ended year-long military domination and started again the rise of a desirable participatory environment in Thailand. A new national election was held in September 1992, with slightly higher voter turnouts than in the former election. The Democrat party won and formed a coalition government.

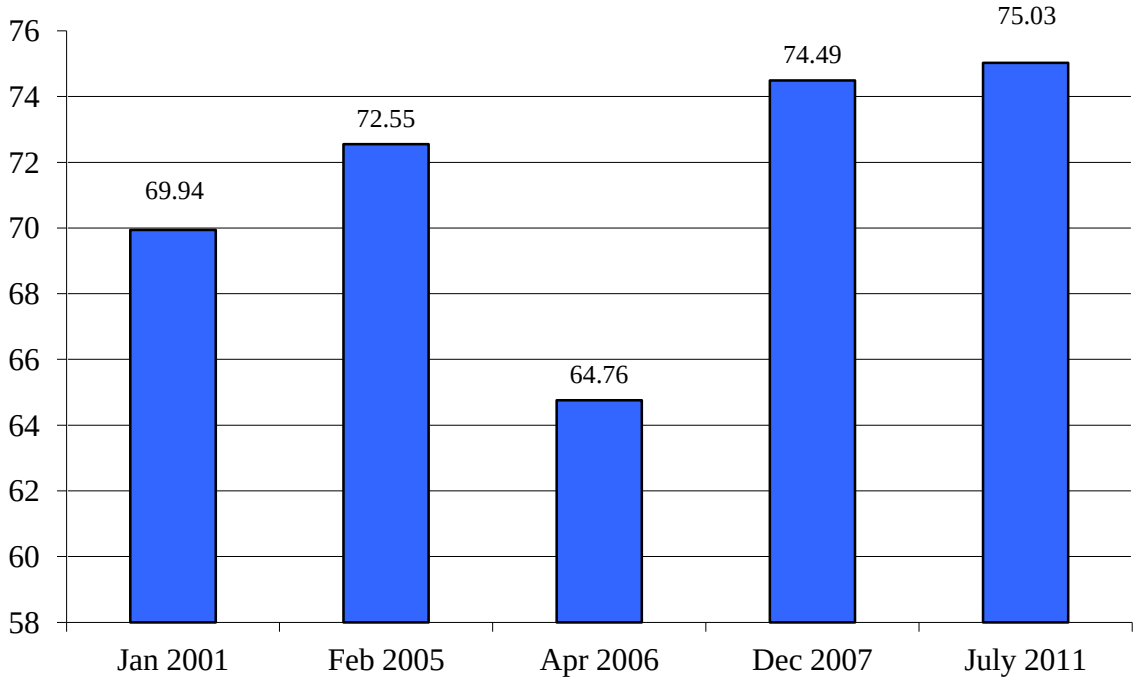
[35] The NPKC gave five reasons for taking power from Chartchai government; 1) the government had unbearable corruption problem, 2) government officials were oppressed and intimidated by political officials, 3) Chartchai government was the parliamentary dictatorship, 4) the military institution was threatened, and 5) The case of the abolition of royal institution was distorted. For more details, please see "Announcement of the National Peace Keeping Council No.1," The Royal Thai Government Gazette, vol 108, part 32, Special issue, Dated 23 February 1991.

Political participation in Thailand reached a new stage when the country adopted the 16th constitution, promulgated in October 1997, often called "the People's Constitution". It was the first time that Thai people participated directly or indirectly in the establishment of the constitution. Moreover, the 1997 constitution gave greater importance to political participation of Thai people in the governance and checking the exercise of the state power. The new regulations that enhance political participation of Thai people included, for example, specifying that election is a duty of Thai people, generating more flexible rules to set up a political party, and for the first time that the Senate will come from direct election.

Moreover, the role of non-state actors has been growing and developing. People and the media have had more freedom of expression, social movements flourished; and civil society organizations expanded their activities. In the past, the lower class was inactive in political activities and it would seem almost impossible for them to fight for their rights against the elites' absolute power (Boonsanong 1975: 191). However, the 1997 constitution has opened more opportunities and provided more benefits for not only the lower class but also for the middle class to get involved in politics through the increase of civil society activities (Ockey 2004: 156).

After the promulgation of the 1997 constitution, voter turnout gradually increased and reached its maximum of 75.03 percent in 2011 (see Figure 2-3). However, there was a big drop of voter turnout in 2006 after Prime Minister Thaksin Shinnawatra (2001-2006) decided to dissolve the Parliament due to the widespread opposition against his rule by the group called People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), with the drop in voter turnout, largely due to a boycott by opposition parties.

Figure 2-3: Voter turnouts of national elections (on constituency system) in Thailand from 2001 to 2011



Sources: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Due to the rising power and popularity of Prime Minister Thaksin, who was the most charismatic and, at the same time, the most controversial leader of Thailand, Thai people have divided into two sides, those who support Thaksin and those who are anti-Thaksin. Thailand has faced a long political conflict that causes deep division among Thai people. The result of this division expanded to bloody turmoil with many people dead and injured during the protests in 2006, 2010, and recently in 2013-2014.

The political conflict has opened an opportunity for the military to step in and expand its influence in Thai politics through bloodless coups in 2006 and 2014 and brought the country back to a military regime. Although the leaders of both coups have promised to restore democracy, a suspension of the constitution, a postponement of election, and a

limitation of political freedom through a close watch of public political activities, tight control of media, and censorship of internet sites have weaken the forces of democracy. Being governed under military regime also erodes trust in the Thai political system and impedes political participation, especially participation through state channels.

However, the political conflict unexpectedly created a positive result in term of political participation in that Thai people, whichever side they take, show increasing interest and participation in Thai politics. Unlike the protest in May 1992 where the protestors mostly were the middle class in Bangkok, the protests since 2006 have showed political participation of people of all classes, both in urban and rural, Bangkokians and non-bangkokians. Thai people have become more active and increasingly participate in political activities through many channels; the higher level of voter turnout after the coup in 2006 demonstrated the increasing participation through elections (see Figure 2-3); the increasing number of political groups and their activities, not only in Bangkok but throughout the country, shows the higher level of participation through civil society; and the prevalent expressions of political opinions via social media present the rising participation through cyber society.

In term of civil society in Thailand, even though civil society should be non-government institutions and a critical player for democratization and participation, according to Naruemon Thabchumpon (2011: 130-131), a state-led civil society where the state dominates civil society organizations could be seen in Thailand. Moreover, power distribution among members of civil society is hardly found in Thai society. Civil society organizations that are more politically and financially powerful tend to gain more privileges than those that are less influential. Regarding networks of civil society groups, there is little evidence of incorporation of civil society organizations in Thailand, especially at the local level, into broader politically significant networks. However, many civil society

organizations strengthen their networks in order to enhance their bargaining power by being in alliances with academics, the urban middle class, and the media (Naruemon 2011: 132).

Civil society in Thailand offers a chance for citizen activism, encourages political participation at all levels, and develops citizen knowledge and skills, especially at local level, can ensure that voices of different groups of people can be heard louder in the decision-making process. The capabilities of civil society to work as a facilitator of citizen actions and a challenger against the state's absolute power can be considered as a positive influence that can help the country move towards a more sufficient level of democratic stability (Naruemon 2011: 137). Additionally, civil society can provide the lower class more opportunities to participate in politics, rather than elections and "in ways that may prove more effective than voting". (Ockey 2004: 156-157)

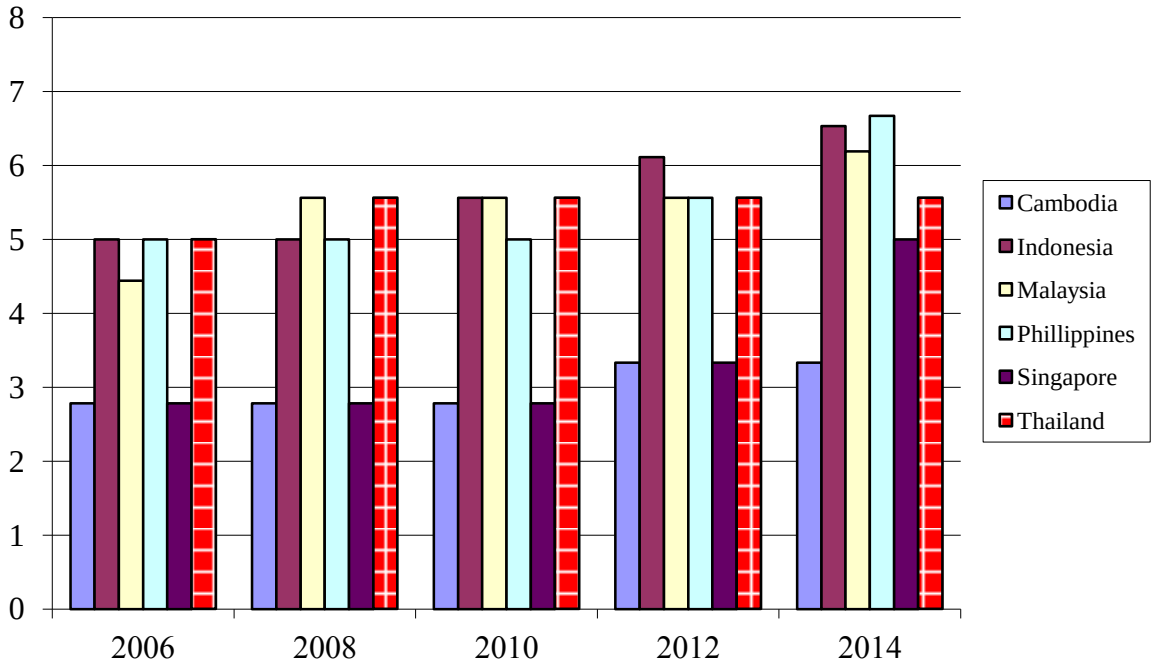
In general, Thai politics has experienced many political reforms and varying degrees of participation by members of the society since 1932. Thailand has regular elections and allows people to have political freedom as well as participate in politics but the elections are sometimes unfair and people's liberties are limited in order to prevent the opposition coming to power. The free and fair elections in Thailand, especially outside Bangkok, were incomplete and often corrupted by vote-buying, fraud, and the corruption of officials (McCargo 2002: 59). Rather than providing benefits to people or class interests, the benefits and power are shared within elite governance groups both elected and unelected namely the military, bureaucracy, and big business groups, allowing them to remain in power over others (Thompson 1993 and Case 1996). As Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1987), a well-known Thai political scientist, criticized, Thai politics reflect elite self-interests rather than those of the people they are supposed to represent.

According to a survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Thailand has an increasing score of political participation after 2006, the beginning of the period of contemporary political conflict in Thailand. Political conflict among people with different political ideologies and socioeconomic backgrounds also has a large influence on political participation. However, when compared to other democratic countries in Southeast Asia, political participation in Thailand, though it is in the leading group, has unchanged scores since 2008. While almost all the countries, as stated in

Figure 2-4, gained increasing scores in 2014, Thailand and Cambodia were the only two countries where scores were constant, without any improvement. Especially, after the latest coup leader, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, became the head of the government in August 2014, Thailand is again ruled under military government. Political participation in Thailand has decreased as the media is controlled, opposite political opinions are prohibited, and the election has been postponed until, as General Prayuth said, the country is stable[36].

[36] From "No Stability, No Election, Prayuth Warns," *Khaosod English*, 9 March 2015, < http://www.khaosodenglish.com /detail.php?newsid=1425891626>, accessed on 15 April 2015.

Figure 2-4: Political participation in Southeast Asia democratic countries



Sources: The Economist Intelligence Unit

Therefore, with the mix of freedom and control, some might argue the political system and participation in Thailand can be seen as, at least in some periods, capable of dealing with people's demands through democratic process. However, others might argue the Thai political system is based on self-interest, corrupt, and unable to solve the actual problems of Thai residents (Neher 1988: 193). As Duncan McCargo (2002: 50) mentioned, "despite the growing importance of political participation, fundamental inequalities of power and resources persist in contemporary Thailand." This problem needs to be solved and the state has to be responsive in order to improve political participation for Thai people. Moreover, the problems of inequity of political power and the limitation of popular political engagement have a lot of negative impacts on Thai people and minority groups in the

country, especially the Malay Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand as discussed in the following section.

Political participation in the Thai southern border context

Many studies about political behavior and political participation of people in the South describe that southern people (*Khon Tai*) often claim that they have more political awareness than Thais (*Khon Thai*) of other regions (Suthiwong 1984, Charun 1999, Thanet 2004, and Ockey 2008). Although this statement cannot be proved or disproved, Askew (2006: 21) mentioned Khon Tai are regularly aware and suspicious of deceitful activities of the Thai state and of opportunistic politicians. They would oppose actions they regard as unjust. Moreover, when compared to the Thai community, the Muslim people have a well organized and structured set of collective actions. They regularly participate in Friday prayer and big gatherings at the mosque together, where they talk about politics. One reason is that Islam does not separate religion from politics (Thanet 2004: 49).

Although the political rights and channels of participation for people in the deep south, especially those living in the conflict area, seem to be narrowed and restricted by state interference, this condition can be conducive to either expanding the violence or, simultaneously sparking the desire of more people to participate. People in the conflict area of southern Thailand still engage in Thai politics to some extent through many channels of political participation. The next section will clarify political participation in southern Thailand by dividing it into three channels of participation, as discussed earlier in the above section on modes of political participation. The three forms of participation include 1) *political participation through election* which includes voting and campaign activity, 2)

political participation through the state which refers to contacting government officials, both voluntarily and involuntarily, and 3) *political participation through civil society* which involves organizational and communal activity. In this study, level of political participation is measured into both quantitative and qualitative forms. For quantitative data, the thesis collected statistical data such as voter turnout, electoral results, number of cases received by courts, and number of members of business organizations to help evaluate level of political participation. However, measuring political participation might be flawed if focusing only on quantitative data. So, this study also measured political participation by comparing qualitative data or the stories told by participants during field research, using this data and information to support the statistical data. Since level of participation cannot be measured precisely, this study does not intend to give a definitive answer. It provides evidence qualified, by using words such as more or less likely, tends to be high or low, to show the likelihood of people's political participation.

1) Political participation through election: Although the violence has escalated, political participation of the Malay-Muslim people who are living in the midst of a long-term conflict has increased over the past 20 years. In the earlier period, voter turnout rates of national elections in 1946 in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat were as low as 32 percent, 20 percent, and 28 percent respectively (Morell 1974: 254) and until 1983 turnout rates in Pattani were never more than 50 percent (Pichai, Somchet, and Worawit 1987: 2). According to Ockey (2008, 132-133), one of the reasons that turnout rates in earlier periods was quite low could possibly be because of the difficulty of the voters to get to the polls which increased the opportunity cost of voting for Muslim people. Moreover, the problem of low literacy in the south has been another barrier that impedes the Malay-Muslims from political involvement (Yegar 2002: 90). So, many locals in the rural area chose not to vote and that

was beneficial to Buddhist candidates who had their support in urban areas where it was less difficult for people to get to the polls. As a result, the first national election in 1933, the representatives of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, where the majority is Muslim, were Buddhists.

However, the Malay Muslim communities in the south have generally preferred to act within the political system to achieve their goals. So, especially after public utilities and transportation were thoroughly developed and the level of literacy increased, we could see the attempt of the Malay Muslim communities to achieve their objectives through the Thai political system, even during periods of serious conflicts (Ockey 2008: 124). This is confirmed by recent national elections in 2005, 2007 and 2011 as the voter turnout in the lower south where the conflict and violence has been located was more than 70% and higher than the national average[37].

Participation through elections is one of the channels that the Malay-Muslims in the south can choose their representatives in the parliament, who will be able to represent their interests and protect the rights of the Malay-Muslims. Therefore, after the society is more developed and the Malay-Muslims are more educated and aware of their political rights, the Muslim representatives of the three southernmost provinces have gained more seats in the parliament. Almost all of the representatives from the three provinces, Yala, Patani, and Narathiwat in the latest election in 2011 are Muslims. There is only one Buddhist representative who won in Yala.

Even though the southernmost people are facing a harsh time of conflict, they have shown their desire to participate in the political system through elections, at a higher rate than people who live in other areas where conflict does not affect them directly. For some, the prolonged conflict and violence between the insurgent groups and the Thai state can only end

[37] The statistical data of voter turnout in Thailand is collected from the website of Office of the Election Commission of Thailand. Office of the Election Commission of Thailand, 'Sathiti karn Leugtung' [election statistics] < http://www.ect.go.th/th/?page_id=494>, accessed 11 February 2015.

up bloodily by an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. For some, such non-violent ways as elections are seen as a better way that can lead to national integration and finally the end of the conflict. So, elections are only meaningful if they can lead to policy changes for the common good of the society.

2) Political participation through the state: In Thailand, there is concern that the centralized government and its coercive policy towards the southern conflict would impede people from participating in politics and that would prolong the conflict and violence in the area. Research by the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, Prince of Songkhla University in 2011[38] shows local people in the three southernmost provinces perceive one of the main reasons why the government's Community Economic Development Plan failed was because people in the area did not have an opportunity in planning and participating in the project.

Moreover, state interference over Malay-Muslim citizens destroys the relationship between the state through its agencies and people, especially the relations between people and the military, which is an important agency that takes major actions aimed at solving the conflict in the Deep South of Thailand. Approximately 150,000 soldiers, police, and paramilitary troops have been sent to the region to fight and protect people from an estimated 9,000 rebels in three southernmost provinces (Srisompob 2012: 7). Martial law gives the military utmost power over civilians to control the violence. However, the military has been accused of enforcing the law without understanding local tradition and regardless of Islamic

[38] The research was conducted by the Deep South Watch organization in September 2011 by surveying 3,031 people in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwas. Srisomphop Jitpiromsri, 'Kwamrounrang tee yuedyuea ruearung nai satanakarn karnMueang tee mai naenorn lung karnlueaktung 2554' [The prolonged violence during uncertain political situation after the 2011 national election], *Deep South Watch*, (published online 27 September 2011) < http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/2305>, accessed 11 February 2012,

rules. Moreover, the army has been blamed for using violent strategies by threatening and torturing the Malay-Muslims who have been suspected of involvement with the rebels.

In addition, the massive government budget that has been dumped into the area for 10 years to solve the problem creates doubt among academics and people who work in the conflict area about the transparency of this budget. They question whether state agencies, especially the army, enjoy working in the so-called "industry of insecurity" area and somehow they believe this is the reason why the violence is prolonged and nowhere close to an end (McCargo 2007, Funston 2008, and International Crisis Group 2009). The big concern of this defect by the state plus the army is that the insurgents reiterate the injustices and human rights abuses by the Thai military to draw people onto their side and alienate them from the state.

Although the desire to participate in politics is an individual decision, the state is one of the most important variables that affect the level and pattern of political participation of its citizens. However, due to the state's centralized power and restricted control over citizens, political participation in a conflict area is limited by the state's close watch and tightly control under the application of martial law. Thailand can be considered as a strong and coercive state in which popular involvement in politics, particularly for those living in the midst of conflict and violence, is more likely limited, perhaps pushing them away from participation and joining the opposition to against the state rather than bringing in more people to participate peacefully through state provided channels.

3) Political participation through civil society: There are increasing numbers of civil society organizations in the three southern border provinces since the conflict flared up in 2004. The ongoing conflict attracted more civil society groups to come and work in the area.

There are now about 250 civil society organizations[39] working in the southern border provinces of Thailand in many fields such as human rights, women, economics, public health, education, media, and development. However, civil society in southern Thailand is weak and divided. Although there are such civil society groups as the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand and the Deep South Civil Society Media Network that operate to create more cooperation among other civil society organizations, the wider and deeper collaborations are yet to be seen.

The increasing numbers of civil society organizations in southern Thailand encourages more people to engage in politics and ensures that people have voices in the policy-making process towards resolutions of the ongoing conflict. However, the feelings of insecurity and the suspicions of local people about the work of civil society organizations obstruct them from participating and cooperating in civil society activities. The civil society organizations in the Far South of Thailand therefore struggle to prove their effectiveness and attract larger group of local people to participate and strengthen the power of the civil society.

Furthermore, the role of religion must be mentioned here. Typically in southern Thailand, religion linked to politics. For example, during election campaigns the candidates use religion as a bridge to connect them to the people. For Muslim election candidates, they come to pray at mosque and spend time there to promote their policies. Similar to Muslim candidates, Buddhist election candidates go to temples to meet and introduce themselves to Buddhist voters. However, religion has a more active role and involvement in political participation during a conflict situation. Both monks and Imam or Islamic religious leaders

[39] The number of civil society organizations in southern border provinces of Thailand , including Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and some parts of Songkhla, was collected by the Deep South Watch Organization in April 2012. Muhammad Ayub Pathan, 'Thankhormool ongkorn prachasungkhom nai chaidantai, [The database of civil society organizations in southern border provinces of Thailand], *Deep South Watch*, (published online 11 May 2012) <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3201>, accessed 20 September 2014.

are the victims of the violence and the militants are trying to create a division between Buddhists and Muslims, threatening the Thai-Buddhists to get them to leave the area[40]. However, while both Buddhist and Islamic clericals are targets of the conflict between Malay-Muslim militants and the Thai state, they are also important actors that influence people's thoughts and opinions about the prolonged conflict.

For the Buddhists, the ongoing conflict that has cost thousands of Thai Buddhist lives heightens the anti-Muslim sentiment among the Thai Buddhists, not only in the three southernmost provinces but throughout the country. The normal functions of Buddhist temples in the Far South have changed during the conflict period. Many temples are used not only for routine religious activities but also for security purposes, such as shelters for Thai soldiers or army camps (McCargo 2009: 23). Buddhist monks have become more engaged in politics and express their attitude or even comment on the work of the government regarding the conflict[41]. For example, The Pattani Sangha Administration issued statements in response to the violent attacks that caused the deaths of Buddhist monks on 16 October 2005 and 5 March 2011[42].

For the Muslims, religious leaders have unavoidably been involved in the conflict since the beginning. The situation of the Malay-Muslims and the religious leaders in southern Thailand was particularly bad during the government's assimilation policy of promoting Thai-ness in the late 1930s during Phibun's government. Examples of Phibun's assimilation policy are the pressure to convert non-Buddhists to the national Buddhist

[40] For examples of threatening leaflets, please see Duncan McCargo, "The Politics of Buddhist identity in Thailand's deep south: The Demise of civil religion," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2009): 14-20.

[41] For example, please see Sanitsuda Ekachai, "Ahimsa is the key to peace," *Bangkok Post*, 27 October 2005.

[42] For details of both statements (in Thai), please visit 'Thalangkarn khanasong Pattani' (The statements of the Pattani Sangha Administration], <http://ptn.onab.go.th/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=79&Itemid=217>, accessed 20 September 2014.

religion, the eradication of the Islamic civil laws in 1943[43], the requirement that all children had to attend Thai primary schools, instead of studying at village schools run by "Toh Kru" (Muslim senior religious teachers) and the cancellation of Fridays as public or school holidays. These policies created fear among the Malay-Muslims that the government integration policy might turn their homeland into *dar al-harb* (house of war or the hostile territory to the Muslims) and caused more anger, dissatisfaction, and resistance among the Malay-Muslims, traditional elites, and religious leaders in the former Greater Patani.

The reactions of Malay-Muslim clerics towards the government assimilation policy and oppressive actions of the Thai state varied from peaceful to violent acts against the Thai state. Some of them, such as Haji Sulong Abdulkadir al-Fatani[44], the President of the Islamic Religious Council and a respected and influential Muslim religious teacher in the Far South of Thailand, pursued their demands for the better livelihood of the Malay-Muslims through opening channels of participation within the Thai political system, whereas some of them chose violent means by supporting or joining the rebels.

In terms of relations between Buddhist and Muslim clerics, although there is little communication between them in the area (McCargo 2009: 14), there is recently emerging cooperation among religious organizations in Thailand, for example, the Inter-religious Council of Thailand (IRC-Thailand), founded in 2009. The organization brings together faith leaders from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism to work towards peace in the southern border provinces of Thailand. However, the work of this organization has not yet been made clear to the public.

[43] Islamic laws were restored in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun again in 1946 during the period of Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyong.

[44] "Haji" is an Arabic word added to a person's name to indicate that he has made a pilgrimage to Mecca. "al-Fatani" means "of Patani". It is attached after the names of scholars who descend from the former Patani Kingdom.

It is undeniable that civil society organizations in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand have critical roles not only in encouraging political participation but also working as a link between the government and local people. There are increasing numbers of civil society organizations working in the conflict area of southern Thailand in a variety of fields. The funding and civil society activists come from various sources, both domestic and international, both Muslims and non-Muslims, and either with or without government funding. However, rather than support from the state, the effectiveness of civil society depends largely on participation from local people. Due to the condition of conflict and violence that can cause unforeseen danger, it is quite difficult for civil society activists to gain trust from local people and convince them to join civil society activities.

When studying political participation of people in the southernmost parts of Thailand, influence of the long-lasting conflict is an important variable that needs to be taken into consideration. Living in the midst of conflict and violence causes additional concern for the Malay-Muslims and other people in the area in deciding how or whether or not they should participate. Even though the Thai government does open opportunities for people to participate in politics through various channels as discussed above, the tight control under martial law and the surveillance by the military still limit political freedom of people there. The reactions of people are varied; some ignore politics, some turn against the state, and some turn this conflict into more participation. As a result, this thesis makes its main focus on this relationship between political participation and conflict, which will be discussed in detail in the chapters that follow.

Conflict as participation

In this section, I review the literature on the relationship between political participation and conflict in order to examine the research's fundamental hypotheses that conflict leads to a greater desire for meaningful political participation and when meaningful political participation is blocked, it will lead people to more violence in a vicious circle.

When people think of 'conflict', a word with negative meaning, they often imagine a confrontation that end up with violence. However, conflict or hardship may be predominantly "influential, and in an unexpected direction, a positive one" (Blattman 2009: 245). The same factors that lead to conflict and violence can also be a pathway leading more people to peaceful political participation. Moreover, Roger D. Petersen (2002) studied ethnic conflict by employing an emotion-based approach. He argued that in the midst of conflict, people with fear would avoid any risky behaviors because fear "heightens the desire for security" (Petersen 2002: 68), whereas people with anger or resentment tend to be more involved in riskier activities. Thus, the literature suggests that conflict and violence sometimes have pacifying effects by acting as a driver of peaceful political participation and, simultaneously, acting in an opposite way as a stimulator for aggressive political action.

There are several studies from various regions that portray similar patterns of positive effects from conflict and violence on the level of political participation. Christopher Blattman (2009), whose research focused on war and political participation in Uganda, found that violence can lead to greater collective action and victims of violence are considerably more likely to vote and to lead in their communities. Experiencing violence increases voting among the former soldiers in Uganda. John Bellows and Edward Miguel (2009) studied war and collective action in Sierra Leone and found that individuals who directly experienced violence show higher levels of political mobilization and engagement than non-victims. They

are more likely to attend community meetings, join social and political groups, and vote. Later, Steven Dale Shewfelt (2009) examined social and political life after wartime trauma in Aceh, Bosnia, and among Vietnam veteran in the United States. His conclusion is similar to the former studies that individuals who experienced more extensive wartime trauma are generally more likely to participate in many types of social and political activities than are those who experience fewer traumatic wartime experiences.

Conflict and violence can then act as a trigger that pulls people's aspiration to participate in solving the conflict through non-violent means of participation, largely due to witnessing violence and suffering, and this could be the most likely way that leads a country to perpetual peace. As Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson (2009: 94) mentioned, "the greater the level of participation by all political communities and domestic constituencies, the higher the likelihood that certain problems can be alleviated before they turn into serious and irresolvable conflict."

Conversely, conflict and violence can also reveal negative effects to political actions in a way that motivates aggressive political behavior, if there is evidence of state oppressive acts that obstruct personal rights and deny citizen participation. The authoritarian regime and state repressive security structures can then transform popular pubic resistance into violent armed revolution as a response to a brutal and discriminate use of force by the state, as happened in Southeast Asia during the 1940s and 1950s, in Central America during the 1970s and 1980s, and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s (Goodwin 2001). As Oskars Thoms and Ron James (2007) mentioned, denial of political participation rights is linked to internal conflict. Abuses of such personal integrity rights as the inequality in accessing basic needs and political participation can be recognized as "direct conflict triggers" that lead to conflict emergence and escalation (Thoms and James 2007: 704).

Thus, conflict and violence have tremendous influence on political attitudes and participation. On the one hand, conflict and traumatic experience can transform into the increase of individual participation and community activism (Bellows and Miguel 2009: 1145). On the other hand, living in violent context can have a negative influence on political actions depending on the level of state control of citizen participation. Therefore, an alternative solution to ease the conflict is to improve access to political participation, not only in government but also in the establishment of an open civil society, and a weakening of the state's desire for repression (Thoms and James 2007: 705, and Minority Rights Group International 2007: 32). When there are many legal and non-violent channels of participation and the political right of people to participate is protected and promoted, violent actions should be less unlikely (Muller 1985: 48).

In sum, on the one hand, conflict and the state's repressive actions during the conflict can damage confidence in the political system and impede people from participation. Moreover, there is a possibility that this condition can turn them to the use of violence as another way to preserve their political interests. On the other hand, conflict can promote the shared feeling of non-violent actions among groups of people who suffer from the conflict and want no more harm and violence in their communities. With this sense of feeling, conflict can be regarded as a driving factor to popular participation that can turn problems into resolutions.

Hypotheses

Political participation and conflict are interesting and important issues worthy of careful analysis. On the one hand, they seemingly are contrasting words with opposite meanings. However, they can be, on the other hand, the perfect match that can turn crisis into opportunities and create good fortune from adversity. This thesis therefore would like to examine the relationship between political participation of people in the conflict area of southernmost provinces of Thailand and find out if there are any linkages between the escalating conflict and the level of political participation of people who experience the conflict. Based on the literature review discussed earlier, this thesis comes out of these following hypotheses;

1. Conflict leads to a greater desire for peaceful political participation
2. People in a conflict zone are more likely to participate in politics in other forms including electoral and non-electoral ways.
3. There is a relationship between level of violence and level of political participation as follows;
    - The same concerns that lead to violence also lead to participation
    - People's experience of the violence has an additional impact on their desire for political participation.
    - Thus, high levels of violence correlate with a high level of voting, and other forms of participation.
4. A weak civil society failing to promote popular interests and resist state domination will lead to more conflict.
5. A strong state preventing demands and closing channels for peaceful political participation will lead to more conflict.

The first three hypotheses are formulated to understand the linkages between the escalating conflict in the southernmost provinces of Thailand and the level of political participation of people who experienced the conflict. The first hypothesis, which is that conflict leads to a greater desire for peaceful political participation, aims to examine the general concept of conflict as participation, as reviewed in the literature examined in chapter two. Then, after the concept of conflict, in general terms, is examined to determine whether or not the conflict can lead in an unexpected direction, a positive one, the second hypothesis aims to examine the political behaviour of people in conflict areas and test the author's assumption of greater participation of people in the conflict areas of the Deep South. Hypothesis three aims to link the first two hypotheses together and examine if there is any relationship between conflict and participation. The fourth hypothesis aims to investigate the participation and performance of civil society and its interaction with local people and the state. Finally, the fifth hypothesis looks into the state's roles and policies towards political participation of its people in the conflict areas.

Research methodology

The research was conducted by applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The unobtrusive research, which is content analysis and analysis of existing statistics, was applied to this thesis as a method of studying the violence in Thailand's southernmost provinces. Also, the research methodology included conducting qualitative field research by using techniques of informal and in-depth interviews to collect data from local people and authorities including government officers, Members of Parliament (MPs), and local politicians both in Bangkok and in the South.

Unobtrusive measures

The techniques used in unobtrusive measures were as follows;

1. *Content analysis*

The research examined the past and present crisis in southern Thailand by gathering data from the following sources;

- *Newspapers and newspaper editorials*: The data was collected from both national and international press during the period in question which was from 2001 until the present time.
- *Books and scholarly journals*: The issue of violence in three southernmost provinces of Thailand has been of wide concern to not only Thai academics and journalists, but also international experts on Thailand, on ethnicity and violence, on Muslim separatists, or even on terrorism. Therefore, there are many books written in Thai or English by these academics and experts about political participation and Southern Thailand's violence during the past ten years. Moreover, there are many books written on such topics as political participation, ethnic conflict, ethno-religious violence, Muslim minorities, and Muslim separatists that happened in other countries that provide a comparative perspective.
- *Speeches and interviews*: The research also examined speeches and interviews given by heads of government and government officials as well as local people in the conflict area. These speeches and interviews can be found from newspapers and government websites such as the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- *Web pages:* There are many websites posting information about the violence in Southern Thailand such as www.deepsouthwatch.org which is the website of a

coordinated network of organizations that includes civil society and academic sectors both inside and outside of the southern provinces, and www.isranews.org which is owned by Thai Press Development Foundation. These websites collect news and articles mostly written by people who work for NGOs and stay in the conflict zone so the researcher can search for viewpoints of the locals and people who actually work in the studied area.

- *Social media:* Due to the popularity of the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, posted and shared information on social media is included in the study. The social media is now not only used by individuals for personal purposes, the government agencies, civil society organizations, and even insurgent groups also increasingly use this channel to promote their activities and connect with people inside and outside the conflict area. Therefore, this source of information can help the researcher to gather a variety of information and opinions from various groups of people.
- *Government reports*: The official reports on the conflict from government agencies, such as Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defence, are also taken into consideration as important sources in examining the issue through government perspectives.

2. *Analysis of existing statistics*

This method is particularly significant because existing statistics should always be considered at least a supplemental source of data. This research analyzed data on voter turnout, the amount of deaths and injuries and economic growth of the conflicted area to assess the relations between the conflict and political participation. Moreover, the research

brought data to bear on the question of how the ongoing conflict affects the level of political participation in the southernmost part of Thailand. To that end, the researcher used data available from sources such as the National Statistical Office of Thailand, the Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board, and the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

Field work method

1) Semi-structured interview

This thesis used the semi-structured interview method as the primary technique in collecting data. Considering the advantages and disadvantages of research techniques in social science, the semi-structure interview is the most suitable technique for this thesis. Firstly, this thesis was conducted in conflict areas where discussing conflict and violence is regarded as a sensitive issue that could bring danger to participants. Therefore, the anonymity of participants is crucial. Although other qualitative technique, such as focus groups, can provide in-depth data from participants (Johnson and Turner 2003: 310), it is not anonymous as participants in the group can see each other and hear each others' answers. In addition, the nature of group interviews does not encourage free expression (Khan et.al 1991: 2) and the group opinions may be dictated by only a few participants (Johnson & Turner 2003: 310).

Some quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, are inexpensive (Johnson and Turner 2003: 310), guarantee anonymity, and are able to have larger population than qualitative method (Steckler et al. 1992: 2). They may be less time-consuming, and data can be analyzed more quickly (Yauch and Steudel 2003: 473). Yet, information from the quantitative method may lack in-depth information that the researcher needs that and can only be acquired from the interview method (Steckler et al. 1992: 2).

After evaluating all techniques, the semi-structured interview method is the most suitable technique for this thesis. This is mainly because the anonymity of participants is the priority concern of this study and in-depth data is needed for analyzing the topic. Despite, the limitations of this technique, such as it being time-consuming both in data collection and analysis, this technique is worth the investment in time.

The semi-structured interview technique was applied in conducting this research because it allows interviewees to express their experiences and opinions freely and allows follow-up to clarify those opinions. Moreover, as some questions involving interviewees' experiences of conflict may inadvertently prove to be personal and sensitive, semi-structured interviews allow the discussion to move on to less sensitive topics as appropriate. Yet, semi-structured interview can allow the researcher to have in-depth information from engaging in an open and informal talk with interviewees.

The information sought from the interviews was as followings:

1. The opinions and experiences on political participation and conflict in southern Thailand
2. The reasons for and expectations of participating / not participating in political activities
3. The effects of ongoing conflict on political participation
4. The role and influence of state and civil society in political participation during the conflict.

Table 2-1 shows the core questions asked in the interview, which were set to serve the associated topics:

Table 2-1: The sample of topics and questions asked in the interviews

Sample topics	Sample questions
1. Level of political participation and the relations between conflict experiences and participation.	• Do you usually vote? • Do you participate in any other political activities?
2. The effect of the conflict and violence on political participation.	• Has the conflict prevented you from participating in political activities? • Has the violence motivated you to get involved in politics or try to make things better?
3. Roles and involvement of the state in political participation during the conflict	• What methods of political participation are available to people in your community? • Are people in the conflict areas able to participate? How do they participate?
4. The significant impact of the state on the level of political participation and conflict	• Are there enough channels of political participation provided by the state? • How satisfied are you with state policy on political participation and conflict in southern Thailand? • How does your organization coordinate with the state during the conflict?

Sample topics	Sample questions
5. Roles of civil society in responding to political participation	• Are you a member of any CSOs? • What are your reasons for joining, as a member or participants of, CSOs? • Do your organization's activities receive much attention from local people?
6. The significant impact of civil society on the level of political participation and conflict	• Are there enough CSOs in your community? • How effective is civil society in your community?
7. The experiences and strategies of politicians in running for an election in southern Thailand	• What were your strategies in running for an election? • Does the conflict affect your election campaign and policies?
8. How can political participation enhance economic development during the conflict?	• How does your organization participate in politics? • Do you think a business organization should participate in politics? Why? Why not?
9. Roles and impact of religion towards the conflict	• Do religious activities receive much attention from local people nowadays? • How can religious organizations help people who face hardship from the current conflict?
10. How does the violence affect political participation?	• Has the conflict prevented you from participating in political activities? • Has the violence inspired you to get involved in politics or try to make things better?

2) Risks of interviews

Conducting field research in conflict areas, where participants have a different culture and background from the researcher, unavoidably caused some risks and limitations in interviews. First of all, due to the concern for safety, the selection of places of interviews had to be limited to the areas with lower risks of violent incidents, such as in urban areas. Since the interviews were mostly conducted in urban areas, some points of views from rural people might be overlooked. However, the researcher did not ignore this weakness. The viewpoints of rural people were expressed through interviews of some university students who were studying ta Prince of Songkhla University and Thaksin University, but have their hometown in rural areas of the southernmost provinces of Thailand, where the conflict and violence is more frequent. They expressed the viewpoints of their families and communities, located in rural areas, where the researcher could not easily go herself.

Secondly, the researcher needed to exercise caution and discretion in questions asked during interviews. Although the objectives of the interviews were not to bring out detailed stories of violent experiences from interviewees, some questions could, without intention, cause some anxiety. So, the researcher tried to avoid discussing sensitive issues to decrease the risk of anxiety. Yet, there were some interviewees who wanted to share their experiences about conflict and violence at their hometown and wanted their stories be heard by other people. In addition, having a different religion and culture between interviewer and participants may have caused some limitation in discussions. The researcher, who is Buddhist, needed to be careful about participants' religious practices. For example, the researcher needed to concern about Muslim praying times and avoid making appointments during that time. Some sensitive issues regarding their religious belief, needed to be avoided or asked with care. It was important to show respect to their belief and culture.The researcher,

who is Buddhist, needed to be careful about participants' religious practices. For example, the researcher needed to be concerned about Muslim praying times and avoid making appointments during that time. Some sensitive issues regarding religious beliefs, needed to be avoided or asked with care. Moreover, the differences in religion might cause some distance between the researcher and interviewee. There is chance that an interviewee might share different information with researchers from a different background or speaking a different language, such as English or Malay.

Furthermore, since the topic of this study is related to the ongoing conflict in their region, questions regarding conflict issues needed to be avoided, or asked carefully. Since the interviewees were sometimes suspicious, especially when talking to strangers, they tended not to give in depth interviews on subjects related to conflict issues. Therefore, in-depth information received from interviews was difficult to attain. Last, but not least, since the interviewees comprised many groups of people, ranging from university students, to NGOs, to military and government officials, the researcher received two opposite sides of the same stories. So the researcher needed to be as neutral as possible. To further decrease any bias, the researcher tried to find more information from statistical data and other academic sources before making analysis drawing conclusions.

3) Ethical issues

The researcher paid close attention to the safety and rights of interviewees, especially when the information provided could put them at risk. This thesis was also approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury and was conducted according to their high standards. In addition, due to the differences of culture and religion between the researcher and some participants, prior to carrying out the research, the researcher met with

university lecturers in the region and discussed potential cultural issues. The data collection process was designed to protect the anonymity of participants. The use of pseudonyms is applied to all participants. Exact positions or titles are not referenced. Thus, phrases like “a local government official”, or “an elected politician” were used in order to preserve confidentiality and participants’ identities.

The researcher made contact with participants before going to interview them. All participants understood the risk involved in this thesis. All of them were aware of the topic and scope of questions. The researcher asked participants to choose a place and time where they feel comfortable and safe. The researcher did not disclose these schedules to anyone. Also, all participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form reminding them they could withdraw at any time. The researcher took particular care in avoiding sensitive questions, so that no problems were expected. However, if there were situations where participants felt uncomfortable or stressed, the researcher was prepared to move away from those questions or stop the interview. The researcher asked for permission every time before asking them some sensitive questions and if they were hesitant, for example some participants might fear that their information might negatively affect their career or future and felt uncomfortable talking openly or having a record of that interview. Whenever this happened, the researcher did not pressure them to answer. Among all interviewees, there was one participant who felt uncomfortable to have the interview recorded because he was afraid that his story might later put him at risk. So, the interviewer, with his permission, took notes of the interview instead. All interviews were conducted in Thai and interpreted into English.

Sampling

The participants for semi-structured interviews were divided into seven categories as follows; 1) local government sector, 2) economic sector, 3) political sector, 4) education sector, 5) religion sector, 6) civil society sector, and 7) university students. The researcher chose not to interview ordinary local people directly because she was concerned that local people might not be well aware that some discussed issues, such as violent incidents, separatism, and military activities might put them at risk. In order to avoid any such risks, the researcher chose to interview university students, representing local people, and professionals from various sectors in order to receive a variety of information from a wide range of viewpoints.

Moreover, based on the fact that the researcher had a limited timeframe that she could spend in southern Thailand and her outside status, it would be very difficult to receive much in-depth information from local people, since the process of gaining trust always takes time to accomplish. In contrast, participants in this thesis were easier to contact and willing to discuss in-depth information about the situation in the Southern Thailand with a shorter timeframe needed due to their familiarity with the research process.. The seven groups of participants were able to provide very helpful in-depth information that researcher might not receive from local people. University students, while outside the villages when interviewed, are locals. They live in Songkhla, Pattani and surrounding provinces. Many of them are Muslim. Some had experiences of violence first hand, both by separatists and the state. Students might seem to be the most vulnerable group of all participant groups. However, students showed great awareness of political activities in the Far South.

Case study

The research was conducted in Mueang district of Pattani and 4 districts of Songkhla by dividing into 3 different areas of study.

1. High violence conflict area: Mueang district of Pattani
2. Low violence conflict area: Chana and Thepha of Songkhla
3. Non violence conflict area: Ranot and Sating Phra of Songkhla

For Pattani, the province has experienced the most frequent violence in 2014. According to the 2014 Annual Report by Deep South Incident Database (DSID), during 1 January – 24 December 2014, there were 793 serious incidents in 3 provinces and 4 districts of Songkhla, 291 from 793 violent incidents happened in Pattani (272 incidents in Narathiwat, 200 incidents in Yala and 30 incidents in Songkhla). Among all districts of Pattani, Mueang district experienced the most frequent violence in 2014 (41 from 291 events). So, Mueang district of Pattani was selected as a case study and put into the group of high violence conflict area for this study.

As the violence has escalated beyond 3 provinces (Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat), the 4 districts of Songkhla which are Na Thawi, Saba Yoi, Chana, and Thepha has been added into the Emergency Decree in the Deep South of Thailand. Interestingly, amidst the violent incidents, voter turnout in these 4 districts was higher than the other districts in the province that have no record of violence. Constituency 8 of Songkhla including Chana and Thepha districts has the highest voter turnout rates which were 82.42% in 2005 and 83% in 2011. Constituency 4, Ranot, Krasae Sin, and Sathing Phra districts were reported as one of the poorest districts of Songkhla and have no record of violence. Voter turnout there was only 73.22% in the 2005 election.

Therefore, based on statistical data of violence and voter turnout, Mueang district of Pattani and the 4 districts of Songkhla were chosen for comparison in order to seek a clearer perception of how people in high violence conflict, low violence conflict, and non violence conflict zones act differently in terms of political participation. Mueang district of Pattani represents a high violence conflict area study, Chana and Thepha of Songkhla is studied as low violence conflict area, and the non violence conflict area of study are Ranot and Sathing Phra (Kra Sae Sin was not taken into consideration because there is no mosque in this district).

This thesis focuses mainly on political participation in conflict areas of the Deep South. Case studies were chosen to create clearer pictures of how people in different types of conflict zones and non conflict zones act differently in terms of political participation. Despite having different social and historical context, Ranot and Sathing Phra are located in Songkhla, which is the same province as the low violence conflict areas of this study, Chana and Thepha. So, they share some similar aspects, such as the same local state officials. Also, since Ranot and Sathing Phra are not far from the Deep South where the violent incidents occur, the influence from the conflict and violence in the Deep South unavoidably affects people in Ranot and Sathing Phra to some degree. Therefore, due to sharing some issues of conflict and violence, Ranot and Sathing Phra were selected for study to provide a broader perspective on the influence of conflict and violence, although they are not presented as full case studies.

The present chapter presents insights from the literature on political participation in general view and more specifically on conflict-related participation. Also, the overall image of political participation in the Thai and Thai south context is presented to provide a basic understanding of political participation in Thailand. In the next chapter, my thesis further explores political participation and conflict in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand before 2001 by dividing into the three modes of participation as outlined earlier.

Chapter 3 : Political Participation in the Deep South before 2004

Due to being conquered unwillingly by the Thai state, and incorporating all the religious, ethnic, cultural, educational, socio-economic grievances explained above, the Malay-Muslims in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand has a long history of resistance in varying degrees against the Thai governments to preserve their rights and seek justice. However, not all Malay-Muslims consider such violent resistance as the best way to fight for protecting their rights. The vast majority show their intentions to participate within the Thai political system through elections, contacting state officials, and civil society to pursue their goals. Although the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand cannot always overtly express their political opinions because of concern over the consequences which may be violent, their attention to politics **is** not different from the Buddhists (Albritton and Denton 2008: 9).

When the Thai government lessened the degree of assimilation policies and moved to a more democratic system, the Malay-Muslims participated increasingly within the Thai political system through national and local elections, as well as non-electoral channels of participation. As James Ockey (2008: 124) stated, "When political participation has been allowed, the Malay Muslim community has sought to work within the system to meet its goal." Because of increasing political participation, the Malay-Muslims were able to acquire more political control, which also enabled them to gain more bargaining power and capabilities to develop their communities and protect their rights and seek justice. Moreover, the open channels of participation would make the Malay-Muslims more willing to participate and integrate into the Thai polity.

Political participation through election

The change of the Thai political system from absolute monarchy to constitutional democracy in 1932 opened opportunities for the Malay-Muslims to participate in Thai politics. However, the group of reformers, called the Promoters, considered that Thai citizens were not ready yet for full democracy due to the low level of education and political skills. So, members of parliament in the early period comprised one half appointed members and the other half elected members (Ockey 2008: 126). In addition, formal political parties were banned until the 1957 election, although informal political parties emerged at the end of World War II.

The first election in Thailand was held in 1933, an indirect election. The first elected MPs in the three southernmost provinces were all Thai Buddhists. However, none of them was elected ever again. The next election in 1937, the first direct election in the country, opened new channels for the Malay-Muslims to express their political opinion through voting and the parliamentary system. The competition of the candidates was intense, especially the competition between Kamukda Abdunlabut[45] and Chareon Seubsaeng[46]in Pattani province. Charoen, although a Buddhist, was Haji Sulong's supporter and closed friend (Bukhoree 2006: 30) so he got some support from the Malay-Muslim voters who supported Haji Sulong. During the election campaign, Kamukda tried to convince the Malay-Muslim voters to vote for a Muslim candidate (Kamukda was the only Malay-Muslim among four candidates) and criticized Haji Sulong that he supported a Thai Buddhist candidate rather than the Malay-Muslim brotherhood (Ockey 2008: 128-129). However, the election in the three southern provinces cannot be considered only as a contest between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai-

[45] Kamukda Abdunlabut (Phraphiphitpakdi) is the son of the last sultan of Yaring.

[46] Charoen Seubsang (Khun Chareonworavej) was a government medical officer in Pattani and Narathiwat.

Buddhists, it should also be considered as a competition between two different political opinions regarding the Malay-Muslim future, especially a competition between Kamukda's integration campaign policy and Haji sulong's autonomy principles, supported by Charoen. James Ockey (2008: 130) commented about this rivalry that

> This pattern may seem ironic since generally Kamukda supported integration while Haji Sulong supported autonomy, yet this reversal is also a good indication of the way that integration and autonomy were confused, but nevertheless central to the electoral process at the time.

Before Thailand had elections, the Malay-Muslims who wanted autonomy or disagreed with Thai integration usually joined the rebels and express their demands violently against the Thai state. After elections were held, Malay-Muslims who wanted autonomy chose to fight within Thai political system to pursue their goals. Although it is a different kind of fight, it could be the way to reach to the same goals.

The first direct national election in 1937 indicated the successful attempt of the Muslim candidates and voters to have their Muslim representatives from the three southern provinces in the parliament for the first time. The two elected MPs, Kamukda Abdunlabut and Tengku Abdul Jalal[47], were traditional elites who decided to participate within Thai political system as representatives of the Malay-Muslims. However, the election did not open opportunity for only traditional elites to participate in Thai politics but also opened a chance for ordinary Malay-Muslim citizens. Waelae Ben Abat[48], the first Malay-Muslim MP of Yala, was not of royal blood but was just an ordinary Malay-Muslim tradesman in Yala who decided to take part in Thai politics and use the parliamentary system as a way to defend the

[47] Tengku Abdul Jalal (Adul Na Saiburi) is the younger brother of the former governor of Saiburi and the descendant of Sultan.

[48] Waelae Ben Abat (Wilai Benjaluk) was born in Pattani and later moved to Yala for his business.

interests of the Malay-Muslims (Bukhoree 2012: 44-45). All three MPs from the 1937 election were re-elected in 1938. The results of the 1933, 1937, and 1938 national elections in the three southern border provinces are shown in Table 3-1

Table 3-1: National election results from 1933 to 1938

	Yala		Pattani		Narathiwat	
	Name	**Religion**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Name**	**Religion**
1933	Sa-Nga Saisinlapa	Buddhist	Thaen Wisetsombat	Buddhist	Rit Ratthanasisuk	Buddhist
1937	Waelae Ben Abat	Muslim	Kamukda Abdunlabut	Muslim	Tengku Abdul Jalal	Muslim
1938	Waelae Ben Abat	Muslim	Kamukda Abdunlabut	Muslim	Tengku Abdul Jalal	Muslim

Source: Adapted from James Ockey 2008, "Elections and Political Integration in the Lower South of Thailand," in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on the Plural Peninsula*, edited by Michael J. Montesano and Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press), p. 127.

However, even though the Thai new political system opened more opportunities for the Malay-Muslims, both traditional elites and ordinary citizens, to have voices in the parliament through voting, the work of the Malay-Muslim MPs from the three southern provinces was threatened by the Thai governments. Tengku Abdul Jalal, or Adul Na Saiburi, was the first Malay-Muslim MP of Narathiwat who tried to work within the Thai political system. However, after his debate in parliament in 1944 against General Phibun, where he argued that the Phibun government mistreated the Malay-Muslims, he was kept under observation by the government. He, then, had to flee to Malaysia in 1945[49]. Since the channel for participation through the parliamentary system was closed for him, he was left to choose

[49] For further details of Tengku Abdul Jalal, see Areephen Uttarasinthu, 'Khao kue Sor Sor Malayu khon raek khong changwat 'Narathiwat'' [He was the first Malayu MP of Narathiwat], *Public Post Online*, (published online 8 February 2012) <http://www.publicpostonline.com/main/content.php?page=sub&category=11&id=305>, accessed 18 April 2015.

between violence and doing nothing. So, rather than participating within the Thai political system as before, he chose violent methods to fight against the Thai state by joining the resistance movement[50], founding the BNPP later on.

Since the Malay-Muslim MPs could not function effectively in the Thai political system, the confidence of the Malay-Muslims in the Thai political system and governments gradually decreased (Thanet 2004: 21). Moreover, the dissatisfaction of the Malay-Muslims toward the assimilation policy during Phibun government (1938-1944) led to low voter turnout in the region which benefited the Buddhist candidates (Ockey 2008: 132-133). As a result, all seats in the three southern provinces were won by the Thai Buddhist politicians in the 1946 election. There was only one seat in the 1948 election belonging to the Muslim candidate in Narathiwat, Samat Eiamvirot, and only one Muslim candidate in Pattani, Kamukda Abdunlabut, was re-elected in 1952 (see Table 3-2).

Table 3-2: National election results from 1946 to 1952 by provinces

	Yala		**Pattani**		**Narathiwat**	
	Name	**Religion**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Name**	**Religion**
1946	Prasart Chaiyatho	Buddhist	Chareon Seubsaeng	Buddhist	Wong Chaisuwan	Buddhist
1948	Salee Kunnarong	Buddhist	Chareon Seubsaeng	Buddhist	Samat Eiamvirot	Muslim
1952	Prasart Chaiyatho	Buddhist	Kamukda Abdunlabut	Muslim	Erb Issara	Buddhist

Source: Adapted from James Ockey 2008, "Elections and Political Integration in the Lower South of Thailand," in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on the Plural Peninsula,* edited by Michael J. Montesano and Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press), p. 132.

[50] After he left Narathiwat, Tengku Abdul Jalal, at first, joined Tengku Mahmud Mahyuddin's GAMPAR resistant movement in Kelantan.

Although the Thai governments provided electoral channels of participation, political participation through voting in the early period could not gain much attention from the majority of the Malay-Muslims. Among the 5 elections between 1933 and 1948, only the 1946 national election was held under a democratic regime during the term of Prime Minister Seni Pramoj, while the others were held under military governments. However, the voter turnout rates of national elections in 1946 were still as low as 20 percent, 32 percent, and 28 percent in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, respectively, while national average was 32.52 percent (Morell 1974: 254).

The reasons of the low voter turnout in earlier periods could also be because of the limited development of transportation. So, it was difficult for the Malay-Muslim voters in the rural areas to get to the polls, especially in the wake of World War II (Ockey 2008: 132-133). Moreover, the low literacy in Thai of the Malay-Muslims was another difficulty that obstructed them from political participation (Yegar 2002: 90). Also, the close surveillance and aggressive actions by the Thai state and its officials towards the Malay-Muslim candidates and residents destroyed trustworthiness in the Thai political system. So, the majority of the Malay-Muslims chose not to participate in elections, which favored Thai-Buddhist candidates who had their support from the Buddhists in the urban areas of the three southern provinces. However, although voter turnout was low in the southern border provinces, the competition between election candidates was aggressive and intense. Samat Eiamvirot, the Muslim MP from Narathiwat, was shot to death in front of his house in Narathiwat in 1955 by his election competitors[51].

[51] For further details on the murder of Samat Eiamvirot, **see** Areephen Uttarasinthu, ' 'Samat Eiamvirot' kerd tee Nongjok tae chak pai tee Narathiwat'['Somat Eiamvirot' Born at Nongjok but die out in Narathiwat], *Public Post Online*, (published online 22 February 2012) <http://www.publicpostonline.com/main/content.php?page=sub&category=11&id=314>, accessed 28 April 2015.

The 1957 election in February was the first election where the candidates were formally affiliated with political parties, after the country issued the Political Party Act in 1955 during the Phibun government. However, the government party until 1975 always got the majority of votes because they had controlling power over the cabinet and the bureaucracy (Ockey 1994: 253). Similar to other regions, the elected candidates of the three southern border provinces were mostly affiliated with a government party. The Seri Manangkasila party, the government party and first registered political party of Thailand, led by General Phibun, won most seats in the 1957 February election; the Sahaphumi party, a government party supported by General Sarit, won most seats in the following election; and the Sahaprachathai party (United Thai People's party), a government party led by General Thanom, won most seats in the 1969 election (see Table 3). Areephen Uttarasin (2013), the former MP from Narathiwat, interestingly remarked that despite the unjust practices and the implementation of assimilation policies of the military governments during the 1950s and the 1960s, the well-known Malay-Muslim politicians who were highly likely to be elected decided to affiliate with the government parties. The Malay-Muslim politicians who were affiliated with the government party included Ahmeen Tohmeena, the second son of Haji Sulong and older brother of Den Tohmeena. Despite the widespread belief his father was killed by the Thai officials in 1954, Ahmeen decided to run for election in 1957 under Phibun's party, the Seri Managkasila. This is because in the opposition the Malay-Muslim politicians would have no influence in cabinet or on policy. Therefore, joining a government party would provide them more advantages for their Malay-Muslim constituents.

However, Ahmeen Tohmeena faced a similar fate to Tengku Abdul Jalal. During a year of participation through parliamentary system, he was a spokesman for the Malay-Muslims regarding their rights and justice. In 1958, he published and distributed the book written by his father, Haji Sulong. This book, Gugusan Chahaya Kesalamatan (The light of peace), explained "the necessity of struggling for independence and co-operation among the Malays" (Haemindra 1977: 85, note 3). The Thai government perceived this distribution of Sulong's books as a threat to the Thai state, so the books were burnt and Ahmeen was charged with being a rebel (*Komchadleuk* 13 March 2013). After he was discharged, he was closely watched and believed himself likely to be assassinated by the Thai government (McCargo 2008: 63). So, he had to flee to Malaysia and was believed to become the leader of the BRN-Coordinate (*Thairath* 2 January 2014).

After the 35-year-long period that the country was ruled under military governments between 1938 and 1973, there was a short period of civilian government. The influence of the military government party had faded and would finally disappear. However, many politicians from the government parties still remained although they changed to other political parties instead. Under the new constitution issued by the civilian government, led by Sanya Dhammasak, in 1974, some election regulations were changed. For example, the candidates had to affiliate with political parties and the constituencies changed from province based to district based. Some seats in the 1975 election were lost to Thai-Buddhist candidates. There were half Malay-Muslim MPs and half Thai Buddhist MPs in the Far South, and they came from different political parties (see Table 3-3).

Unlike the 1975 election, in the 1976 national election, the Malay-Muslim candidates from the Democrat party won all seats in the three southern provinces (See Table 3-3). This election can be considered one of the most important elections for the Malay-Muslims because the leaders of Democrat Party promised to their voters in the South that the Party

would guarantee a Minister position in the government to a Malay-Muslim if the Democrat candidates in the southern border provinces won all the seats. The religious leaders in the South then cooperated and worked together to support Democrat candidates; ultimately, the Democrat candidates won all seats in the three southern provinces, including Satun. As promised, the Democrat Party, the winning party in the 1976 national election, appointed three Malay-Muslim MPs to work in high-ranking positions in the government. Siddik Sareef from Narathiwat was appointed as Deputy Minister of Education; Den Tohmeena from Pattani was appointed as Secretary of the Minister of Defence; and Sudin Phuyutthanon from Pattani was appointed as Secretary of the Minister of Finance. It was the first time in Thai history that the Malay-Muslims in southernmost provinces of Thailand worked in high-level political positions in the Thai government[52] (Areephen 2012).

[52] Che Abdulla Langputeh, the Muslim MP from Satun was appointed a cabinet Minister under Phibun government in 1948. Since the thesis focuses on the violence in the three southernmost provinces, Satun, then, is not mentioned here.

Table 3-3: National election results from 1957 to 1979 by provinces

	Yala			Pattani			Narathiwat		
	Name	**Religion**	**Political Party**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Political Party**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Political Party**
Feb 1957	Prasart Chaiyatho	Buddhist	Seri Manangkasila	Buntherng Abdunlabut Ahmeen Tohmeena	Muslim Muslim	Seri Manangkasila Seri Manangkasila	Suriyon Riwa Sophon Eiamittipol	Buddhist Muslim	Seri Manangkasila Thammatipat
Dec 1957	Adul Phumnarong	Muslim	Sahaphumi	Ahmeen Tohmeena Chareon Seubsaeng	Muslim Buddhist	Independent Independent	Sophon Eiamittipol Erb Issara	Muslim Buddhist	Sahaphumi Sahaphumi
1969	Adul Phumnarong	Muslim	Independent	Waelae Ben Abat Buntherng Abdunlabut	Muslim Muslim	Democrat Saha prachathai	Thaworn Chaisuwan Rewat Ratmukda	Buddhist Muslim	Saha prachathai Saha prachathai
1975	Prasart Chaiyatho	Buddhist	Tham Sangkhom	Taweesak Abdunlabut Kamthorn Lartcharoj Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Chart Thai Chart Thai Kaset Sangkhom	Siddik Sareef Thaworn Chaisuwan	Muslim Buddhist	Democrat Tham Sangkhom
1976	Utsaman Useng	Muslim	Democrat	Den Tohmeena Surapong Ratmukda Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat Democrat Democrat	Wachirat Marothabut Siddik Sareef Siri Abdulsalae	Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat Democrat Democrat
1979	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha Adul Phumnarong	Muslim Muslim	Social Action Chart Thai	Den Tohmeena Taweesak Abdunlabut Kamthorn Lartcharoj (death) WairojPhipitpakdi	Muslim Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Democrat Siam Prachatipatai Siam Prachatipatai Social Action	Seni Madakakul Thaworn Chaisuwan Parinya Jetaphiwat	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Social Action Chart Prachachon Social Action

Source: Adapted from James Ockey 2008, "Elections and Political Integration in the Lower South of Thailand," in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on the Plural Peninsula*, edited by Michael J. Montesano and Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press), p. 132 and 139.

In subsequent elections, especially in 1979 and 1983, although the majority of MPs in the three southern provinces were still Malay-Muslim candidates, they were affiliated with different political parties. Therefore, instead of creating a powerful political force for the Malay-Muslims, the Malay-Muslim politicians had limited influence in national politics as their power was divided by political party differences. To deal with this concern, the Malay-Muslim politicians formed a political group called "Wadah", meaning unity, in order to create a stronger political force for the Malay-Muslims. Den Tohmeena was elected to be chairman of the group with a 12-member committee (Che Man 2003: 19). Its members included not only the Malay-Muslims but also Thai-Buddhists, such as Preecha Boonmee and Phibun Pongthanet.

At first, the candidates from the Wadah group ran in the 1986 election under the Democrat party, and five of its candidates won election in the three southern border provinces. However, the Wadah group was upset by the head of Democrat party, Pichai Rattakul, because he did not appoint any member of Wadah group to a political position. As a result, Wadah decided to withdraw from the Democrat Party and formed its own political party called People's party or Pak Prachachon and successfully ran in the 1988 election (Che Man 2003: 20). Later, the Wadah group joined the New Aspiration Party, formed and led by General Chavalit Yongchaiyut, and won most seats in both elections in 1992 (see Table 3-4). Due to its stronger political power as a group, the Malay-Muslim MPs were able to gain high ranking positions in the cabinet. For example, Den Tohmeena was appointed Deputy Minister of Public Health in 1990 and Deputy Minister of Interior in 1992; Wan Muhamad Noor Matha was appointed Deputy Minister of Interior in 1994 and Minister of Transport in 1995; and Areephen Uttarasin was appointed Deputy Secretary General of the Prime Minister in 1995.

Table 3-4: National election results from 1983 to 1997 by provinces

	Yala			Pattani			Narathiwat		
	Name	**Religion**	**Political Party**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Political Party**	**Name**	**Religion**	**Political Party**
1983	Chalerm Ben Hawan Adul Phumnarong	Muslim Muslim	Social Action Chart Thai	Den Tohmeena Taweesak Abdunlabut Tiang Ruangpradit	Muslim Muslim Buddhist	Chart Thai Chart Thai Chart Thai	Seni Madakakul Thaworn Chaisuwan Sittichai Bueraheng	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Social Action Chart Thai Chart Thai
1986	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha Adul Phumnarong	Muslim Muslim	Democrat Saha Prachatipatai	Den Tohmeena Preecha Boonmee Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Democrat Democrat Saha Prachatipatai	Areephen Uttarasin Phibun Pongthanet Seni Madakakul	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Democrat Democrat Kijprachakhom
1988	Phairoj Chaleawsak Wan Muhamad Noor Matha	Buddhist Muslim	Democrat Prachachon	Den Tohmeena Preecha Boonmee Taweesak Abdunlabut	Muslim Buddhist Muslim	Prachachon Prachachon Social Action	Seni Madakakul Areephen Uttarasin Parinya Jetaphiwat	Muslim Muslim Muslim	Prachachon Prachachon Prachachon
Mar 1992	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha Phisal Yingsaman	Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration New Aspiration	Den Tohmeena Muk Sulaiman Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration New Aspiration Samakkhi Tham	Areephen Uttarasin Jehrrming Tohtayong Parinya Jetaphiwat Najmudeen Uma	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration Samakkhi Tham New Aspiration New Aspiration
Sep 1992	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha Phisal Yingsaman	Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration New Aspiration	Den Tohmeena Muk Suliman Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration New Aspiration New Aspiration	Pornpich Pattanakullert Areephen Uttarasin Surachet Wae-Asae Ramree Mamah	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat New Aspiration Democrat Democrat
1995	Prasert Phongsuwansiri Burhanuddin Useng Wan Muhamad Noor Matha	Buddhist Muslim Muslim	Democrat New Aspiration New Aspiration	Wairoj Phipitpakdi Maripeng Japakiya Muk Sulaiman Sudin Phuyutthanon	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat Democrat New Aspiration New Aspiration	Pornpich Pattanakullert Areephen Uttarasin Surachet Wae-Asae Ramree Mamah	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat New Aspiration Democrat Democrat
1996	Phisal Yingsaman Wan Muhamad Noor Matha Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Muslim Muslim Buddhist	New Aspiration New Aspiration Democrat	Wairoj Phipitpakdi Den Tohmeena Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong Muk Sulaiman	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	Democrat New Aspiration Democrat New Aspiration	Areephen Uttarasin Jehrrming Tohtayong Surachet Wae-Asae Ramree Mamah	Muslim Muslim Muslim Muslim	New Aspiration Democrat Democrat Democrat

Source: The Royal Thai government gazette

Political participation through elections has been revolutionized, since the promulgation of the 16th constitution in October 1997. The 1997 constitution is often called a "People's Constitution". The new regulations, such as specifying that election is a duty of Thai people, providing more flexible rules to set up a new political party, and electing the Senate for the first time in Thailand, positively affected political participation of Thai people, including the Malay-Muslims in the three southern provinces. The first election after the promulgation of the 1997 constitution was held in 2001, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. This channel of political participation has at least a limitation, however. Thai politics, under a bureaucratic polity where political power is clustered in the centralized administration to protect some specific interest groups, leaves only small space for the elected representatives of the provinces to work for their voters (Suhrke 1977: 240). Moreover, due to the limited power that can be used to fulfill Malay-Muslim demands and protect their rights through the parliamentary system, some of the candidates and voters chose to join the separatist movement outside the parliament.

In sum, political participation through elections in the Deep South before the re-emergence of the conflict and violence in the early 2000s experienced some limitations for both voters and politicians. For the voters in the earlier period, their participation in voting showed a low rate of voter turnout due to many reasons, including the difficulty in transportation, the illiteracy of local people, a lack of interest in politics, and the negative attitudes of local people towards Thai government officials and the political system. So, when voters lacked incentives to vote, their participation in elections tended to be low. For politicians, the earlier period illustrated the difficulties for Malay-Muslim politicians to work in the Thai parliament. The feeling of distrust of the Thai government towards the Malay-Muslim politicians obstructed their performance of their duties. As a result, when participation within the Thai political system was limited by the state, some politicians were

left with no choice, but to join the rebels instead. Although the roles of Malay-Muslim politicians gradually increased, especially in the 1990s, the centralized power of Thai politics impeded Malay-Muslim representatives from working effectively for their electorates. When the Malay-Muslim politicians could not deliver policies as promised, voters did not vote and this could also contribute to the low rate of voter turnout.

Even though political participation through elections cannot provide fully satisfactory solutions to the conflict in the South, they are at least another option for the Malay-Muslims to express their demands through elected candidates, and those demands hopefully can be heard by the government and affect public policy. Although the elected MPs have an important role in directly bringing people's problems and demands to the government, the state officials and local authorities are also very important not only in delivering state policies but also in taking care of individual problems as a first contact point for the locals. Political participation through the state is, therefore, significant as outlined in the next section.

Political participation through the state

After Thailand changed to a new political system in 1932, modes of political participation opened for broader groups of people through more participation channels provided by the state. In addition to electoral participation, Thai citizens, including the Malay Muslims, also participated by contacting the state and its agencies. However, there were some problems ranging from cultural differences between Thai state officials and the locals to the oppression from state centralization policy and government officials. Political participation through the state before 2001 thereby was not popular among the Malay-Muslims in the Lower South. Political participation through the state in this section thus examined the

contact and interaction between the Malay-Muslims and state officials, including courts, local bureaucrats, and security officials.

The conflict and violence in the South that originated from the annexation of the Patani kingdom by the Kingdom of Siam and the history of the Malay-Muslim's resistance to protect their rights and independence was fuelled by a range of grievances as explained in the former section. Amongst all the grievances, the state assimilation policies towards the Muslim laws and courts were one of the most sensitive problems that created dissatisfaction and reduced the participatory atmosphere among the Malay-Muslim communities in the lower South. In terms of political participation, courts are generally regarded as a neutral institution that people use to communicate with state officials when they need justice (Dor and Hofnung 2006: 131). In the past, since the annexation with the Thai kingdom in 1902, Siam wanted to apply a single legal system to the entire country which included the area of the Malay-Muslims in the lower south. Islamic law was thus replaced by Siamese law. However, King Chulalongkorn approved a compromise on sensitive cases related to family and inheritance by granting autonomy to the Malay-Muslims to apply Islamic law over civil cases (Surin 1985: 120). So, during that period public legal issues were settled under Thai laws and personal matters of the Malay-Muslims were judged under Islamic laws by Muslim judges or *Qadi*, later called Dato Yutitham[53].

However, in practice the Thai government still intervened and controlled the legal procedure of the Malay-Muslims. The Thai government was concerned that Islamic law was not consistent and systematic, so the government demanded control over the Muslim courts when?? Add date (Surin 1985: 123). The Thai government took control of the religious courts by getting involved in the selection process of *Qadi* who were Muslim judges of the religious courts. As for cases filed under Thai courts, although Muslim judges were appointed to join

[53] *Dato* is a Malay title for respected person. *Yutitham* is a Thai word meaning 'justice'

the panel, they only acted as advisors to Thai judges. So, the Muslim judges had no real power in the Thai state court system (Yegar 2002: 77-78).

The intervention into the Malay-Muslim justice system by the Thai state was even more problematic when the Phibun government abolished Islamic family and inheritance law in 1944 under his assimilation policy, although this change was short-lived. All the Islamic judges of the religious courts for family and property cases were removed (Thanet 2007: 36). Phibun believed that "enacting a special law applicable to Muslims would be equivalent to granting Muslims special rights, and thus fragmenting Thai identity" (Muhammad 2011: 6).

However, for Muslims, Islamic laws, especially for marriage, divorces, and inheritance, are very important. They believe that it is a heavy sin if they do not act according to religious prescriptions. So, the Malay-Muslims avoided filing their cases in Thai courts that were arbitrated by Thai judges under Thai laws (Chalermkiat 1986: 33). The Malay-Muslims thus preferred to settle their cases informally. Some would present their cases to the Islamic courts in Malaysia and some would take their cases to the local *ulama* in their provinces (Ockey 2011: 110). The intervention of the Thai state towards the Islamic justice procedures increased the antagonistic feelings of the Malay-Muslims towards the Thai state and pushed them away from contacting Thai state officials, especially when they needed a justice. There also were protests in the Muslim Lower South provinces to demonstrate their disagreement with Thai state policies.

The subsequent government wanted to reduce the strong feelings and normalize the situation. The Khuang government thus promulgated the Islamic Patronage Act in 1945 and reintroduced Islamic law to apply to cases related to family affairs and inheritance, which is still applied until the present time. However, the application of Islamic laws only applied to the Muslims in the four southern provinces as indicated in the section 3 of *the Rule on the Application of Islamic Law in Four Provinces 1946* that

> Islamic Family Law and Inheritance shall be applied in the Court of First Instance in Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala and Satun where Muslims are both the plaintiff and the defendant or a Muslim files a request in non-contentious cases. (Muhammad 2011: 7)

Nevertheless, the judicial system of Islam was still under the control of jurisdiction of the Thai central government. The Muslim judges or Dato Yutitham, who were selected by the government and had to be able to speak and write Thai, had no real power because the final judgment of each case was decided by a judge from the Ministry of Justice. The intervention of the Thai government in Islamic courts was opposed by Haji Sulong, who strongly believed that the Muslim courts should not be under secular government and the Muslim judges had to be selected by the local imams (Ockey 2011: 112).

So, Haji Sulong raised the concern on the Islamic court system in his seven-point demands to request for a separate Muslim court and the utmost authority of Muslim judges in religious courts. However, although there were attempts from the government to negotiate, Sulong's request for the court system was never approved. The Thai government explained that having separate courts would be too costly for the Thai government as there were relatively few religious cases each year (Thanet 2008: 109). As per records, there was no Malay-Muslim case in the Thai courts at all between 1943 and 1947 (Chalermkiat 1986: 34). However, the reason claimed by the Thai government seemed to avoid the fact that it was probably not that the Malay-Muslims had few cases but that they needed their cases to be judged by Islamic laws. So, this could be the reason that the Malay-Muslims chose not to contact Thai judicial officials to file their cases in Thai courts that against their religious prescriptions. Ultimately, the concern about the Islamic courts brought about negotiations between the Thai state and the Malay-Muslim religious leaders. Although there was no resolution regarding this issue, the process of negotiation, as James Ockey (2008: 134)

expressed, “brought religious leaders in the lower South into the political process in meaningful ways”.

A disagreement on the separation of courts and intervention of the Thai state in religious courts were not the only factors that created a negative atmosphere on political participation through the state. The implementation of centralization and the assimilation policy that gave less importance to the problem of cultural differences between the Thai-Buddhist governors and bureaucrats and the Malay-Muslim citizens also stirred antagonism in the broader Malay-Muslim community. However, not only the state policy was criticized; the mistreatment by Thai governors and bureaucrats of the Malay-Muslims was also part of the failure in encouraging popular participation through the state.

The ignorance and unawareness of cultural differences by Thai-Buddhist governors, who were the rulers of the provinces, contributed to their ill-treatments of the locals. The behaviors of the governors, who came from different races and religions, induced hesitation among the Malay-Muslims to make contact with the state agents. However, the maltreatment caused by their negligence in regard to Malay-Muslim culture caused more problems and increased the feeling of detestation and opposition against the state. One example that illustrated the problem of cultural ignorance of Thai governors that impeded the Malay-Muslims from political participation through the state came during the implementation of State Decrees between 1939 and 1942. The Governor of Pattani, Luang Sunavinwiwat, informed local bureaucrats not to provide government services to Malay-Muslims who wear sarongs or dressed improperly according to the State Decrees (Chalermkiat 1986: 28).

Another unpleasant incident of cultural ignorance happened in 1944 when the Thai Governor of Pattani, Khunjunyawiset, told the Malay-Muslim dignitaries and *ulama* at a meeting to display honor toward a statue of Buddha as it represented a symbol of the state. His speech created dissatisfaction throughout Malay-Muslim communities, as it seemed to be

an insult to Islam, although the Thai governor of Pattani explained that this was just a gesture of respect. Tengku Abdul Jalal, the MP of Narathiwat, sent letters to Prime Minister Phibun and raised this issue in the parliament. The response from the government and parliament upset him (Yegar 2002: 91-92).

Besides the cultural ignorance of the Thai Governors, the tight control and surveillance due to the suspicions of the Thai rulers towards the Malay-Muslims impeded and discouraged the Malay-Muslims from pursuing their political goals within the Thai political system. Even though the new political system opened new pathways for participation, it seemed that the pathways for the participation of the Malay-Muslims was surrounded by surveillance cameras and barred by a brick wall. An active participant in politics was usually perceived by the Thai state as an enemy who needed to be kept under close watch by the state. Thai governors as local state authorities were then assigned to do this job for the state.

There were many examples of Malay-Muslims who tried to participate within legal channels of political participation, but the more the politically active they were, the more likely they became suspected of insurgency in the eyes of the Thai state. An early example was Tengku Abdul Jalal, the former MP of Narathiwat. After he tried to raise the issue of abuse and mistreatment by the Thai governor and local authorities towards the Malay-Muslims in 1944, he was regarded by the Thai state as too radical and needing close observation. So, he was put under close watch by Thai state officials. With no choice and no hope in the Thai political system, he had to leave the parliament and country; subsequently, he became the founder of the BNPP, the underground separatist group that used violence to seek independence from Thailand.

The next example was more tragic. Similar to Tengku Abdul Jalal, due to Haji Sulong's political activity, government officials started to place Sulong under close observation, as they considered his political acts had become more obstinate (Ockey 2011:

112). Unlike other Malay-Muslims who used violent methods to reach their goals of autonomy to preserve their rights under Islam and their identity of Malay, Sulong fought to reach the same goal but with non-violent means under Thai laws. However, the expressions of autonomy, even by non-violent methods, were always considered by Thai governments as supporting separatism (Ockey 2008: 137). Therefore, Sulong's actions were considered suspicious and he was kept under close watch by state officials and local authorities. Phraya Rattanaphakdi (Chaeng Suwannachinda)[54], the last royal Thai governor of Pattani was re-appointed by the military government in 1947 as the governor of Pattani and was ordered to solve the conflict in the South. He opposed Sulong's political orientation and perceived Sulong's active political roles as stimulating conflict and resistance in the southern provinces (Thanet 2008: 101). He started to secretly spy on Sulong by selecting both Thais and Malay-Muslims who he trusted as his agents[55] (Chalermkiat 1986: 104-105). Eventually, Phraya Rattanaphakdi had a crucial role in the arrest of Sulong in 1948[56]. Sadly, Sulong was then killed by the Thai police in 1954.

Moreover, besides the hostile relationship with the Thai-Buddhist governors that hindered Malay-Muslim's intentions of political participation through the state, the relationship between Thai bureaucrats and the locals was also sour. Olli-Pekka Ruohomaki (1999: 99) described the southerners as having "a feeling of dislike for the central

[54] Phraya Rattanphakdi was the royal governor of Pattani in 1929-1933 and was removed by People's Party—the party of Sulong's political ally, Charoen Seubsaeng—after the overthrown of the Absolute Monarchy in Thailand.

[55] Some said that Phraya Rattanaphakdi even threatened someone to work as a spy for him and then hired another spy to spy on his spy to make sure that they would not betray him. During that time, senior government officials, like the governors, had so much power that people could not easily resist their orders. People who resisted would possibly be in danger of extrajudicial killings, see Chalermkiat Khunthongpet, "*The resistance against the government's policy in the four southern provinces of Thailand under Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir's leadership 1939-1954 [in Thai]",* Master thesis, Silpakorn university: 1986, p. 104-105.

[56] Haji Sulong believed the reason that Phraya Rattanaphakdi opposed him could possibly be personal since he had refused to support Phraya Rattanaphakdi in an election, see James Ockey, "Individual Imaginings: The Religio-Nationalist Pilgrimages of Haji Sulong Abdulkadir al-Fatani. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 42(1): 2011, p. 115.

government and its representatives and pride in the local dialect, culture, and history." So, the contact and relationship between the local Malay-Muslims and the Thai-Buddhist bureaucrats who were sent to the area by central governments remained limited because the Malay-Muslims perceived those bureaucrats as outsiders and as hostile (Enloe 1980: 88).

One of the major problems that limited political participation through the state in the earlier period before 2001 was the cultural and language barrier. Although the Malay-Muslims were the majority in the southern border provinces (see

Table 3-5), the number of Malay-Muslims who worked in local administration was very low. In 1975, 85 percent of village chiefs in Yala, Pattani, and Naratiwat were Muslims who could not read and write Thai (Girling 1981: 265), whereas the majority of the administrative bureaucrats in the three provinces were Thai Buddhists who could not understand Malay (McCargo 2005: 5). This unbalance of local officials not only decreased the possibility of political participation through the state but also reduced effectiveness of policy implementation. The work of village heads as a bridge to deliver state policies and as representatives of the villages to convey the desires of the community to the Thai bureaucrats who worked in the area were difficult due to the ineffectiveness of communication caused by language illiteracy between the two sides.

Table 3-5: Population of the three southernmost provinces in 1973, 1990, and 2000

	1973			1990			2000		
	Total	**Muslims**	**Muslims (%)**	**Total**	**Muslims**	**Muslims (%)**	**Total**	**Muslims**	**Muslims (%)**
Yala	218,546	133,313	61	340,982	217,365	64	415,500	286,279	69
Pattani	387,842	302,517	78	515,372	403,287	78	596,000	480,972	81
Narathiwat	371,930	290,105	78	546,755	432,655	79	662,400	543,168	82

Source: 1973 data was adapted from Nantawan Haemindra, "The Problem of the Thai-Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand (Part One)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (September, 1976): 198.

1990 and 2000 data was adapted from National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, 1990 and 2000

Even though there were attempts by the Malay-Muslims, such as Haji Sulong, to ask for more Malay-Muslim government officials in the Malay-Muslim provinces, the state would not act on this request. Astri Suhrke (1977: 239) argued that, even if the Malay-Muslims were qualified in terms of education, they were deprived from working in administrative positions in the Far South because they seemed to be untrustworthy in the eyes of the Thai state. Some of the Muslim bureaucrats even changed their religion to Buddhism because they believed being Buddhist could give them more success in their careers (Chalermkiat 1986: 28).

Therefore, Thai-Buddhist officers were sent to work in the Malay-Muslim provinces instead of employing local Malay-Muslims. Moreover, many of officials were reassigned to work in the southern border provinces as a punishment for bad behavior in other regions (Ockey 2008: 148). There were more than one hundred civil servants transferred to the Far South as a punishment for the charges of, for example, corruption and maltreatment, during 1978-1995 and more than eighty percent of them were police. (Ornanong 2001: 187-188).

Many of them were disappointed to work in a remote area far from Bangkok, and that created tensions and bad treatment when giving service to local people. The relationship between state officials and local people worsened due to many complaints about harassment, mistreatment, and corruption by the Thai state officials. As a result, many locals preferred to avoid contact with Thai bureaucrats and officials, including the police and the military wherever and whenever possible (McCargo 2004: 7).

The relationship between Thai security officers and the Malay-Muslims was also weak and probably the weakest among all units of the bureaucracy. The locals perceived state security officers, especially the police, as violent and unjust. When the locals think about the Thai security officers in the South region, the story that were passed from generation to generation were mostly stories about hostility, maltreatment, and injustice. For example, the story about the maltreatment caused by an unjust assimilation policy and its implementation; the police aggressively pulled off and threw away women's hijabs; the police took off and kicked *taqiyah* (prayer cap) like a rattan ball (Chalermkiat 1986: 30-31), and the following story about the Thai police as a law enforcement agency that applied aggressive strategies to the suspected:

> when a Malay was accused of friendship with bad elements, he was immediately arrested by the Siamese police, taken to a lonely place, and beaten before he was taken to the place of detention. They were always threatened and slandered in various ways by the Siamese police, arrested, or simply beaten without bothering to take the matter to court (Syukri 1985: 86).

Another story of aggressive and abusive practices by Thai security officers that led to political unrest in Pattani happened in 1975 when five Muslims were allegedly killed by Thai marine soldiers and one boy was seriously injured but survived. It was one example of how state security officers brought about more violence into the area. The bloodbath led to large

but peaceful protests for 45 days in Pattani to request the withdrawal of the marines, compensation for the victim's families, and a meeting between Prime Minister Kukrit and the Muslim leaders in Pattani (Suhrke 1977: 240). Thousands of Malay-Muslims participated in the protests. The government sent its representative, a minister Prida Phattanabut, to negotiate with the protesters, and finally, the protest ended after the negotiation.

This kind of story has been told and repeated again and again and for some, they even have experienced it themselves. Especially, due to the heavy-handed tactics towards the suspected Malay-Muslim insurgents, instead of a feeling of being protected by state security officers, many felt more insecure. The local Malay-Muslims thus become estranged and too afraid to contact Thai security agents, even when they were facing danger.

However, after the government policies changed towards more flexibility and a participatory atmosphere during the premiership of General Prem in 1980, the local grievances, including the problems of abuse and maltreatment by security officers received more attention. Counter-insurgency institutions, such as the Combined 43rd Civilian-Police-Military Command (CPM 43), the security agency that work against insurgencies and extrajudicial killings in the Malay-Muslim provinces, and the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC), the military-run center to deal with local grievances, were founded in the 1980s to deal with the conflict and violence in the south with more peaceful strategies.

After the promulgation of the People's Constitution in 1997 that focused more on popular participation, the security sector of the Thai state issued a national security policy for the southern border provinces in 1999 in line with the purpose of the 1997 constitution. According to this policy, the state security agency realized the importance of political participation and wanted to promote political participation of all parties in order to prevent

conflict and violence and bring peace to the region[57]. However, the success of this policy has not yet been accomplished.

Political participation through the state needs cooperation between two sides, the state and the people. However, for people in the Deep South, the accumulated grievances, ranging from the intervention of the Thai state into the Malay-Muslim justice system, to the cultural and language suppression, to the suspicions and mistreatment by some Thai government officials that many people experienced gradually destroyed the relationship between the state and local people, and negatively affected political participation through the state. Even though the Thai government showed some attempt to encourage more participation and create more trust among the Malay-Muslims, especially during the Prem government when the tension was eased, the feeling of being a deprived minority and the suspicions of some Malay-Muslims deterred many from contacting the state. Some people chose to contact the state in an attempt to increase minority consciousness in the eyes of the state (Brown 1988: 65). Nevertheless, the power of individual participation through elections and through the state apparently was not strong enough to attract more attention from the Thai state. Thus, some Malay-Muslims decided to participate collectively as a group through civil society organizations to pursue their political demands.

[57] For details of the policy, see Office of the National Security Council of Thailand, "*National Security Policy for the Southern Border Provinces, 1999-2003 (in Thai)"*, Office of the National Secuity Council of Thailand. <http://www.nsc.go.th/Download1/PolicySouth42to46.pdf>, accessed 18 April 2015.

Political participation through civil society

Political participation can be in many forms, both individually through elections and contacts with state officials, and collectively through civil society. Although the definitions of civil society are varied among scholars as explained in Chapter 2, the main feature of civil society is generally understood as the linkage between the state and the individual (Belloni 2001). Civil society, as a socio-political space, is essentially instrumental in supporting individual voices in society to be expressed without impediment and in controlling excesses of state political power (Belloni 2001: 167). Political participation through civil society therefore is an important function of civil society in order to create societal quality and connection among these three actors, state, civil society, and individuals (Wallace and Pichler 2009: 256).

Although the concept of civil society is not new and has been studied by Western scholars for more than two hundred years ago (Edwards 2004: 7), organized civil society organizations were unfamiliar to Thai people prior to the period of democratic transition in 1970s (ADB 2011: 1). However, if we consider the concept of civil society as a group of people set up to represent collective goals with an aim to influence government decision making on community policies (Verba, Nie, and Barbic: 1973, and Huntington and Nelson: 1976), the emergence of civic participation through civil society organizations in the Malay-Muslim provinces can be traced back at least to the 1940s when Haji Sulong founded the Patani People's Movement (PPM) in 1944. The major objectives of the PPM were the desire for autonomy within the Thai kingdom and the development of better welfare of the Malay-Muslims through legal means under the Thai constitution. Sulong and the PPM requested the seven-point demand to the government asking for better welfare of the Malay-Muslims and local administrative autonomy within Siam. Due to the PPM's role in pursuing its collective

goals for Malay-Muslims through democratic methods, the organization was considered as "the first civic non-belligerent political movement to emerge in the area" (Porath 2010: 589).

Another organization that suits the definition of civil society is the Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya or Greater Patani Malayu Association (GAMPAR). GAMPAR was established by Tengku Mahmud Mahyiddin in 1948 as a civic welfare association to look after well-being of the Malay-Muslims and request the right of self-determination for the Malay-Muslims (Porath 2010: 590). One of GAMPAR's strategies was to gain world support, so members of GAMPAR sent petitions to the UN and other countries' governments demanding the recognition of the rights of the Malay-Muslims. However, since the non-violent methods through constitutional means alone could not accomplish their foremost goal of autonomy, GAMPAR was later dissolved and the old members of GAMPAR and the former Narathiwat MP, Tengku Abdul Jalal, founded the The Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani or Patani National Liberation Front (BNPP) in 1959. The BNPP was recognized as the first belligerent separatist movement (Porath 2010: 591).

Despite the expansion of separatist movements during 1960s – 1980s, this period also showed the prominent roles of the Malay-Muslim intellectuals and the student-led civil society organizations in the Malay-Muslim provinces of Thailand. The first example of a successful Muslim student-led organization, which still has a major role in Muslim activities nationwide, including the three southern provinces, is the Thai Muslim Student Association (TMSA)[58]. The TMSA was established in 1965, and later registered as a legalized organization in 1967, by a group of Muslim students from various universities in Thailand to help and educate Muslim youth in the country. Former members include Wan Muhammad Noor Matha, a long time MP, cabinet minister, and speaker of the House, and Karun Kuyai, advisor of the Council of Muslim Organizations of Thailand (CMOT) and advisor to the

[58] For more information on the Thai Muslim Student Association, see http://www.thaimuslimstudent.org

Minister of Education. The TMSA expanded its networks and cooperation not only throughout the country but also internationally under its motto “We all are brothers”.

The TMSA activities in educating and increasing the potential of the Muslim youth in all dimensions were well acknowledged and created many capable students who later became distinguished persons in the country. Also, the learning through participation in civil society movement created political skills and awareness that benefited members’ careers in the future. Important and successful Muslim politicians who used to be a member of the TMSA were, for example, Wan Moohammad Noor Matha, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Minister of foreign affairs and Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Areephen Uttarasin, the long time MP of Narathiwat, Deputy Minister of Education, and Secretary to the Minister (Preeda 2001: 105).

Since the activities of the TMSA did not involve political matters, members of the TMSA, mostly Malay-Muslim students from the three provinces who got government scholarship to study in universities in Bangkok such as Areephen Uttarasin and Chusak Maneechayangkul, set up a new group called Selatan in 1972. Unlike the TMSA whose activities excluded political matters, the Selatan group organized political activities promoting democracy and justice in the three southern provinces (Areephen 2015). The Selatan group had a major role in the Pattani protest in 1975 after the five Malay-Muslims were killed by Thai marine soldiers. The group had been contacted by victims’ relatives to help them to bring justice to the victims and their family. So, members of the Selatan group decided to expand its members to include a wider range of participants other than university students and formed a new group called the Civil Rights Protection Center (Areephen 2014).

The roles of the Civil Rights Protection Center in the 1975 Protest in Pattani illustrated and exemplified quite clearly the importance of civil society during the conflict. Living in the midst of conflict where the state officials and the local authorities were

undependable and untrustworthy in the eyes of the locals, the victims from violence and/or malpractices by state officials then decided to ask for help from a civil society organization, in this case from the Civil Rights Protection Center, to bring justice to them. The Civil Rights Protection Center worked as an intermediary and representative of the victims in expressing their grievances and demands to the Thai government. Where individual voices may not be strong enough to draw the state's attention, especially the voices of minorities from a remote area, but political participation through civil society can make the voice louder through collective civic power. The Center, as a political activist organization, had better political skills and knew how to gain more attention from people and the state. More than ten thousand people joined the protest, and due to the power of the masses, the Thai government, after 45 days of nonviolent protests, finally agreed that the government would replace the Thai governor of Pattani with a Muslim governor, arrest the suspects, pay compensation to victim's relatives, gradually withdraw the marines, and give amnesty to protestors (Ockey 2008: 142).

On the other hand, the work of the Civil Rights Protection Center also demonstrated the difficulties of civil society in working in the conflict area, surrounded by people's suspicions, the state's tight control, and the rebels' violence. Wanich Sunthornnon (2011: 55) told his experience when he was a student at Prince of Songkhla University in Pattani and participated in the protest in 1975. The Center had asked for volunteer students to go to rural areas in order to ask for the locals' opinions about the protest and try to incite them to join the protest. He, as one of the volunteers, described that

> During the time when we went to the rural communities, there was **a** high possibility that we could face any kind of danger at any time ranging from the threat from bandits to the danger from political outlaws from neighboring countries. However, the scariest thing that we were afraid of the most was from our police and the army…. Every time when we recorded

> information about the persecution by the Thai officials or the economic grievances of the locals, we had to find **a** way to hide it completely. Otherwise, if we met with the (security) officials, we might be searched and investigated and that information we recorded could bring us into the big trouble.

The emergence of political participation among the Malay-Muslim students influenced and inspired the young generation to participate in politics to preserve their political rights and justice. For example, the PNYS group, was formed in 1979 by the Muslim Ramkhamhaeng university students from Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, Satun and Songkhla; and the Yala Young Muslim Group, was established in 1981 to coordinate with other Muslim clubs in schools and academic institutions in Yala.

During and after the 1980s, Thailand had moved forward to more democratic system with increasing political liberalization under civilian governments. The roles of civil society activists were also strengthened and expanded, including the roles of scholars. The well known scholars who were working and writing on the problems of the Malay-Muslims and Thailand's southern border provinces such as Dr Surin Pitsuwan and Dr. Chaiwat Satha-Anand had more crucial roles in directly or indirectly guiding government strategies towards the Malay-Muslims (Ornanong 2001: 132). Moreover, the open democracy during this period encouraged political awareness of people and gave them more confidence to negotiate with the Thai state through the collective power of civil society.

During the late 1980s, another example highlighted the increasing role of civil society in Thailand's southern border provinces and its expanded networks and cooperation in southern Thailand in helping the Malay-Muslims to bargain with the state. The interesting case worth mention here is the Hijab Movement in Yala province from December 1987 to March 1988, when a group of female Muslim students at Yala Teachers' Training College made their demands to the College to allow Muslim women to wear the Hijab. In the past,

Muslim women in Thailand only wear Hijab at the time of prayer or during specific Muslim ceremonies (Preeda 2001: 109). The encouragement of wearing Hijab in Thailand was inspired significantly by the influence of the global Islamic resurgence in the 1970s (Chaiwat 1994: 281-282). At first, the group of female Muslim students, with the assistance from the College's student club for the promotion of Islamic virtues, sent a letter to the College in December 1987, but the response was negative. They then asked for support from the Muslim MPs from the Wadah group, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC), Islamic Council of Yala Province, and the Office of the *Chularatchamontri* (Romadon 2012: 19).

The request of the Muslim students to wear Hijab in the College expanded to demonstrations at the Central mosque of Yala in February – March 1988 and more than ten thousand people joined the protest (Preeda 2001: 109). The Hijab movement not only raised concerns among Muslims in Yala but there were concerns and debates on the Hijab issue throughout the country. Eventually, public pressure brought about success for the Muslim students at Yala Teachers' Training College. The College eased its regulations and allowed the Muslim students to wear the Hijab. The success of this movement was partly a result of the cooperation between the Muslim student groups in Yala and the Thai Muslim Student Association. The College's Student Club for the Promotion of Islamic Virtues responded and liaised within the College and the Yala Young Muslims Group was responsible for finding more support and coordination from people in Yala, whereas the Thai Muslim Student Association, based in Bangkok and with its networks in other regions, played a major role in raising more concern on this issue and finding more supporting groups and cooperation in Bangkok and other regions (Romadon 2012: 25).

However, similar to other movements in the conflict area, there were always obstructions from security officers, even when the movements were peaceful under the regulations of democracy. Moreover, although the Hijab movement was clearly aimed at cultural demands, the Thai security officers always perceived it as a political demand for separatism that needed to be suppressed (Ornanong 2001: 144). Muhammad Ayub Pathan, the former president of the Yala Young Muslims group, commented that since the Thai state experienced many violent acts from the Malay-Muslim rebels for a very long time, the state was always suspicious of the Malay-Muslim peaceful movements in open public space (Romadon 2012: 26). Therefore, the Thai government considered the civic movements of the Malay-Muslims as a threat to national security, rather than a channel of political participation that people use to express their demands to the state.

At first, the Hijab movement in Yala lasted only two days (11 – 12 February 1988) partly because the movement leaders were inexperienced and not well prepared for the situation, and partly because the military blocked the area and hindered people from participating. Support from the Wadah MPs to mobilize more people not only led to the change of regulations on Hijab dress in the Yala Teachers' Training College but also brought about changing attitudes and more understanding in Thai society (Preeda 2001: 109).

When the 16th constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand was promulgated in 1997, it was considered by many to be "the most liberal constitution Thailand has ever known" (Preeda 2001: 104). The improvements in the 1997 constitution included the establishment of new mechanisms for human rights protections, administrative decentralization, and the encouragement of participatory democracy that opened more opportunities for civil society to work in communities with more confidence. The promulgation of the 1997 constitution was considered a turning point in political reform in Thailand, which also importantly affected civil society in the conflict area of the southernmost provinces of Thailand. Many civil

society organizations have emerged and been active in various areas in the three southern provinces since the 2000s as a result of the 1997 constitution and especially the escalation of conflict and violence in the south in 2004, which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

In sum, political participation through civil society before the upsurge of violence in 2004 illustrates an interesting result. The political and cultural ignorance of the Thai state towards the rights of minority groups in the nation, including the Malay-Muslims, caused collective actions of local people seeking to fight for their rights and for justice. On the one hand, the non-violent collective actions of local people in protecting their rights and justice paved the way to the growth of civil society in the later period. On the other hand, the state's limitation of participation through collective actions stimulated more conflict in the areas and possibly became one of the reasons that led to the rise of violence in 2004.

Conclusion

After the change of the Thai political system to constitutional democracy in 1932, the opportunity for popular participation was more open to Thai people including the Malay-Muslims in the lower South. Political participation through election took place for the first time in Thai history in 1932. Elections were not only an opportunity for the Malay-Muslims to select their own representatives, elections also provided a chance for Patani traditional elites to participate within the Thai political system as members of Thai parliaments to seek to preserve the rights of the Malay-Muslims. However, due to the long history of the fight between the Malay-Muslims and Thai state, Thai governments always had suspicions of the Malay-Muslims and had problems of an inability to differentiate between demands for decentralization or autonomy and demands for separatism (McCargo 2008: 9). Although there were attempts of the Malay-Muslim MPs, such as Tengku Abdul Jalal and Ameen

Tohmeena, to work under the Thai parliament, their active performance in presenting the problems of discrimination and exposing the unjust practices of the Thai state towards the Malay-Muslims were seen as hostility by Thai security forces. As a result, Malay-Muslim leaders were kept under close surveillance by the Thai government and their names were put onto the blacklist of Thai security agencies (Areephen 2014). Therefore, some gave up their first intention of participation through elections and pursue their goals in more violent ways instead.

The suspicions of the Thai state towards the Malay-Muslims also impeded political participation through the state. Haji Sulong was a good example of the Malay-Muslim who tried to make contact with Thai state officials in order to increase Malay-Muslim rights and recognition. Sadly, his dedication to the greater status of the Malay-Muslims within the Thai kingdom was paid for by his death at the hands of Thai police. As James Ockey (2011: 119) argued, "Ironically, it was his involvement in Thai politics, rather than any attempt to separate from it, that would lead to his untimely death."

Moreover, the intervention in Islamic courts and the abandonment of the Malay language and Islamic culture under the assimilation policies led to the problem of discrimination and unjust practices of the Thai state officials. These problems increased the feeling of alienation among the Malay-Muslims and brought about the hesitation to participate or interact with state officials. Therefore, political participation through the state before 2001 was generally not pursued by the Malay-Muslims in the lower South.

However, despite the feeling of being a deprived minority, some people chose to remain in contact with the state to increase minority consciousness in the eyes of the state (Brown 1988: 65). When the power of individual participation through elections and the state was not strong enough to accomplish their goals, some of Malay-Muslims decided to participate collectively as groups through civil society organizations to pursue their political

demands. Although civil society's effectiveness was hindered by the state's negative perceptions towards Malay-Muslim political activities, the role of civil society organizations, such as the Thai Muslim Student Association (TMSA) and the Civil Rights Protection Center, illustrated productive results in pressuring the state to change its policies.

Chapter 4 : Political Participation through Elections

When Thailand changed its political system from absolute monarchy and replaced it with a constitutional democracy, it provided a new political channel allowing people to engage more actively through elections. Political participation through elections was considered by many Malay-Muslim leaders and voters as an opportunity to participate non-violently to preserve their rights, and to make demands for greater autonomy. The elections also allowed some Malay-Muslims to enter Thai politics as politicians and take part in the policy-making process through the National Assembly of Thailand. So, many Malay-Muslims, both elites and villagers, participated by running for office and voting at a high level.

In this chapter we begin in-depth investigation of political participation through elections, focusing on the impact of the renewed conflict and violence in southern Thailand since 2004. This chapter aims to find out whether or not the ongoing conflict and violence affected political participation through elections and how people in the conflict areas participated through the parliamentary system. The study of political participation through elections in this chapter will cover from the 2001 general elections until the latest national election in 2014 because, firstly, many policies that were issued during the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra after 2001 were criticized for causing the upsurge of violence in southern Thailand. Secondly, those political representatives elected in 2001 were still in office in 2004. Lastly, the change in the electoral system in 2001 as a result of the 1997 Constitution had a major impact on the level of political participation of voters nationwide, including in the Malay-Muslim majority provinces.

This study pays attention to investigate not only political participation of voters, understanding how politicians participate in the elections is also important and cannot be ignored. In the earlier period, political representatives of the Malay-Muslims were mostly members of the traditional religious or aristocratic elite. After the conflict and violence increased in 2004, a wider group of people got involved in politics not only as voters but also politicians. The influence of conflict and violence motivated some people to participate as a political representative to directly involve in policy formation. Studying political participation of politicians can explain how conflict and violence affected their motivation to participate and how it created new challenges and competition in electoral campaigns. Also, studying participation of politicians can give a better perspective in understanding how electoral behavior of voters changed according to the conflict and violence as well as new campaign techniques. The study of political participation through elections in this chapter is then divided into two specific groups of political participants, voters and politicians, to undertand their broad patterns of political participation. Moreover, all levels of elections, including national, senate, and local elections are taken into consideration in this chapter. Lastly, we end this chapter with a direct comparison of conflict and non-conflict areas in order to get a clearer perspective of how the ongoing conflict and violence affected political participation through elections in different areas.

Voters' political participation in the Deep South

The ongoing conflict and violence affected voters in the Deep South in multifarious ways. Although the violent incidents could frighten some voters away from taking part through elections, many voters in the Deep South were motivated by the conflict and violence to participate in elections. However, the degree of electoral participation may be different in

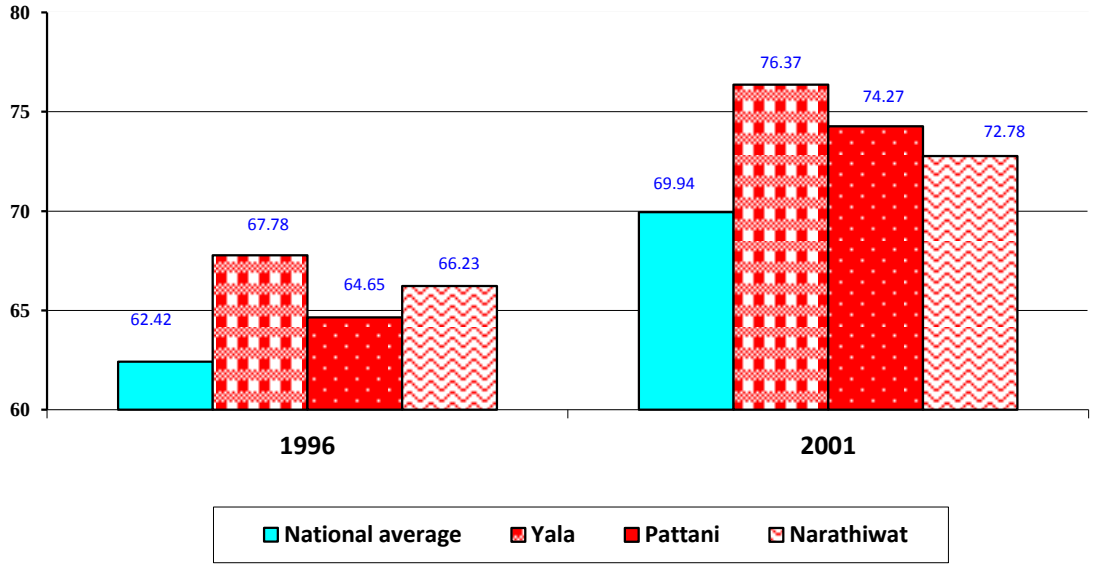
each level of elections. Therefore, this section will discuss voters' participation through elections by dividing into 3 parts, including general elections, Senate elections, and local elections.

General election in the Deep South

Generally, most Malay-Muslims in the southernmost provinces of Thailand participated actively in Thai elections, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. The 1997 constitution emphasized the importance of electoral participation, perhaps more than any other constitution that Thailand ever had before. Several provisions were added or changed to follow the objective of the constitution in encouraging more political participation through elections by Thai citizens. For example, Section 68 made voting compulsory, with some limited penalties, for the first time, to encourage electoral participation and reduce election fraud; Section 136 led to the establishment of an independent Election Commission to hold and control elections at all levels; and Section 285 mandated election of members of local assemblies and local administrative committees. Since the 1997 Constitution made voting mandatory, voters were provided another option of casting a vote by marking a cross in a no vote option to indicate their intention to vote for no candidate[59].

[59] Section 56 of the Organic Act on the Election of Members of the House of Representatives and Senators, B.E. 2541(1998), stated that "In the case where an elector intends to cast a ballot for no candidate nor party list of any political party, the elector shall mark a cross in the space for indicating the intention to cast a ballot for no candidate."

Figure 4-1: Voter turnout of national elections (on constituency system) between 1996 and 2001



Sources: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Voters nationwide, including many Malay-Muslim voters, increasingly participated in the first general election under the new constitution, which was scheduled on 6 January 2001. As shown in Figure 4-1, national voter turnout increased from 62.42% in the 1996 election to 69.94% in the 2001 election. Similarly, voter turnout in the three southernmost provinces also increased and even at a higher rate than the national average. Voter turnout of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat were 76.37%, 74.27%, and 72.78% respectively.

Table 4-1: The results of the 2001 general elections in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat

Province	Name	Religion	Political party
Yala	Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Buddhist	Democrat
	Phaisan Yingsaman	Muslim	New Aspiration
	Burhanuddin Useng	Muslim	New Aspiration
Pattani	Wairot Phiphitphakdi	Muslim	Democrat
	Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong	Muslim	Democrat
	Sommart Jehna	Muslim	Democrat
	Muk Sulaiman	Muslim	New Aspiration
Narathiwat	Pornpich Pattanakullert	Muslim	Democrat
	Suthiphan Sririkanon (dismissed[60])	Muslim	New Aspiration
	Attaphol Mamah (replacement)	Muslim	Thai Rak Thai
	Najmuddin Umar	Muslim	New Aspiration
	Areepen Utarasint	Muslim	New Aspiration

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

The 2001 general election brought about a landslide triumph of Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai party. He won a near majority of 248 seats in the parliament. Thaksin's decisive victory demonstrated that he and his party received very strong support from a huge number of Thai voters nationwide, excepting the southern region. As shown in Table 1, none of the Thai Rak Thai candidates could gain a seat in the lower South[61].

While a large plurality of voters in the country gave their votes to the Thai Rak Thai party, a newborn political party founded in 1998 by Thaksin Shinnawatra, many voters in the Lower South still adhered to their old favorite politicians from both the Wadah group, under the New Aspiration party, and the Democrat Party. As shown in

[60] Suthiphan Sririkanon was given a red card and disqualified by the Election Commission for alleged vote-buying.

[61] Attaphol Mamah, a Thai Rak Thai candidate won later in a by-election.

Table 4-1, among all eleven elected MPs in the three provinces, six winning candidates were from the Wadah group and the other five winning candidates were from the Democrat party.

Even though some former studies on electoral participation in the Lower South regarded many voters in the Lower South as candidate-oriented voters, rather than policy-oriented (Phichai, Somchet, and Worawit, 1987), the repeated success of the Wadah group in this election was also due to their successful policies. The aggregation of the Wadah group increased its political power and helped in carrying out the promises they gave to their voters. Among successful policies initiated by the former Wadah MPs were, for example, foundation of an Islamic Bank, a request for allowing Muslim students to wear hijab in government schools, and development of Islamic civil laws. The performance of Wadah MPs impressed their voters so much that they did not want to change their votes. Moreover, voters' confidence in the Wadah group became an important additional factor that motivated many Malay-Muslim voters to participate in voting to make sure that their Malay-Muslim representatives had power and authority in the national decision making process.

While Wadah's policies gave more importance to the interests of Malay-Muslim communities and greater prominence to Malay-Muslim culture, the Democrat party generally focused more on community and economic development. The Democrat party's vote base in the Lower South was mainly from Thai-Buddhist voters in urban areas. The five seats won by the Democrat candidates in 2001 were mainly in constituencies located in urban areas, such as Mueang districts of the three southernmost provinces. In addition, most of the 2001 MPs of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, both members of the Wadah group and the Democrat party,

were familiar faces who were elected in former elections[62]. So, while many voters in other regions believed in the Thai Rak Thai party's "Think New, Act New" motto and decided to give it a try, many voters in the Deep South were still happy with the performances of their former representatives and did not change their votes in 2001.

Instead, the year 2004 was a turning point when many voters in the Deep South decided to "Think New, Act New" about their voting. Political participation through elections after 2004 was very much affected by the upsurge of violence started by the firearm robbery in January, followed by the Krue-Se and Tak Bai bloody incidents in April and October in 2004. The disappointment in the reaction of the Thaksin government and Thai authorities towards the series of violent incidents was expressed through voting in 2005. The affect of conflict and violence on political participation through elections is clear when looking at the election results in 2005.

After the Thai Rak Thai Party won the 2001 election and Thaksin became a leader of the Thai government, he wanted to expand his power in the parliament so he convinced other smaller parties, including the New Aspiration Party, to merge with the Thai Rak Thai party. As a result, the long-term favorite candidates of many Malay-Muslim voters in the Deep South, the Wadah group, became members of the Thai Rak Thai Party.

During the Thaksin government, many campaign policies, such as a four-year debt moratorium for farmers, the thirty baht healthcare scheme, and *Ban uea athon* (low cost housing) project were implemented as promised. Although many journalists and scholars criticized his populist policies, Thaksin and his party were admired by many voters, especially rural voters, in Thailand. Therefore, when the next election came in February 2005, Thaksin undoubtedly was on top of the Thai political landscape once again. The

[62] There were only two winning candidates, Sommart Jehna, a former teacher and school director from Pattani and Dato Suthiphan Sririkanon from Narathiwat, who were elected for the first time in the 2001 national election.

election results of the 2005 general election brought about an even larger landslide victory for Thaksin as his party won 377 of 500 seats in the parliament nationwide.

However, even though he was gaining popularity throughout the country, this proved untrue in the lower South where no Thai Rak Thai candidate won a parliamentary seat, as shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2: The results of the 2005 general election in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat

Province	Name	Religion	Political party
Yala	Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Buddhist	Democrat
	Abdulkarim Dengrakina	Muslim	Democrat
	Narong Duding	Muslim	Democrat
Pattani	Anwar Salaeh	Muslim	Democrat
	Ismael Yidoromae	Muslim	Democrat
	Mohamadyasi Yusong	Muslim	Democrat
	Zata Arwaekuechi	Muslim	Democrat
Narathiwat	Jehrrming Tohtayong	Muslim	Democrat
	Surachet Wae-Asae	Muslim	Democrat
	Kuheng Yawohasan	Muslim	Chart Thai
	Adul Saheebatu	Muslim	Democrat

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

The election results in 2005 demonstrated that Thaksin's populist policies could not win votes in the Deep South. Many Malay-Muslim voters were apparently unhappy and disappointed with Thaksin's draconian methods in dealing with the conflict and violence. Moreover, due to the renewed violence in 2004, the Democrat party developed its campaign policies to focus more on promoting Malay-Muslim culture and peaceful strategies in order to particularly respond to the disturbances in the Lower South (Askew 2007: 63-64). The Democrat's proposed policies, called "the Pattani Declaration," included, for example, the

revival of SBPAC and CPM 43, the encouragement of decentralization, the establishment of Zakat funds in Muslim communities, and the development of an Islamic justice system[63].

The apparent disappointment of Malay-Muslim voters had a major impact on the loss of all TRT seats in the Lower South, with a corresponding growth of support for the opposition party, the Democrat party, in the southern border provinces (Albritton 2005: 170). Although voter's decisions could be a result of mixed-incentives ranging from policy and candidate preferences to money (vote buying) motivations, voting for the Democrat party could be considered as one of the political expressions that many Malay-Muslims used to show their dissatisfaction and disagreement with the Thaksin government in dealing with the southern problems (Tan-Mullins 2007: 147). As demonstrated in Table 4-2, almost all MP positions in the three provinces were won by Democrat candidates, except one seat in Narathiwat won by Kuheng Yawohasan from the Chart Thai party[64].

Moreover, the performance of the Wadah MPs under the Thaksin government was perhaps considered unimpressive in the eyes of many Malay-Muslims in the conflict areas. Although one of the Wadah leaders, Wan Mohammad Noor Matha, was appointed to work in a prominent political position in the Thaksin cabinet[65], many Malay-Muslim voters were upset with his performance and believed Wan Noor was changing sides to support the Thai state, instead of his fellow Muslims who voted for him (McCargo 2006: 53). Moreover, they

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63 For more details on the Pattani Declaration, see "ปชป-บต.ศอ"ฟื้น"คำประกาศปัตตานี"แถลง .พตท43"ดับไฟใต้" *Manager*, December 25, 2004, <http://www.manager.co.th/Election48/ ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9470000102074>, accessed 5 September 2016.

64 Kuheng was a head of a Democrat branch in Narathiwat. The Democrat party also intended to send him as the Democrat candidate to contest the 2005 electionha. However, he was upset with the Democrat party in not supporting his brother, Watchara Yawohasan, to contest in constituency 1, to replace Pornpich Pattanakullert, who resigned from the Democrats and moved to the Thai Rak Thai Party. So, due to his disappointment with the Democrat party, he then resigned and affiliated with the Chart Thai party. Mohammad Dueramae and Thaweesak Pi, "นิพนธ์ บุญญามณี เปิด 3 สาเหตุเพื่อไทยแพ้ที่ชายแดนใต้," *Deep South Watch*, July 19, 2011, <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/2129>, accessed 15 March 2016.

65 Wan Mohammad Noor Matha was a party list MP between 2001 and 2005 and was appointed Minister of Transport in 2001 and Minister of Interior in 2002.

were doubtful of the performances of the Wadah group and questioned why, although the leaders of the Wadah group were in power in Thai politics during 2004, the violence increased and the extrajudicial killings expanded (*Prachatai*, 9 November 2007). So, despite the success of the Wadah group in earlier elections, especially in the 1990s, all of the Wadah candidates lost their seats in the 2005 national election to, in some constituencies, nearly unknown candidates. For example, Muk Sulaiman, the Wadah MP of Pattani since 1992, lost his seat to a new candidate from the Democrat party, Zata Arwaekuechi, a former member of the Provincial Administrative Organization Council in Pattani. However, even though Zata had a strong vote base and political network in his hometown due to his former position as a local politician, it was nowhere near strong enough to defeat Muk Sulaiman, a Wadah's national politician (Bukhoree 2006: 56). Therefore, it mainly was likely due to the disappointment of voters in the performance of the Thaksin government and the Wadah politicians that he won this national contest.

So, while many voters in other southern provinces voted for the Democrat candidates because they were very fond of the Democrat party and Chuan Leekphai, the affection for the Democrat candidates in the Deep South was probably not so much that voters wanted to vote for them. Instead, it partly was the anger and disappointment of many Malay-Muslim voters towards both Thaksin and the Wadah group, which led many voters to vote for the Democrat newcomer candidates. Some Malay-Muslim voters wanted to send a sign of disapproval to the Thaksin government and to the Wadah group through their voting. As one lecturer from Pattani[66] stated,

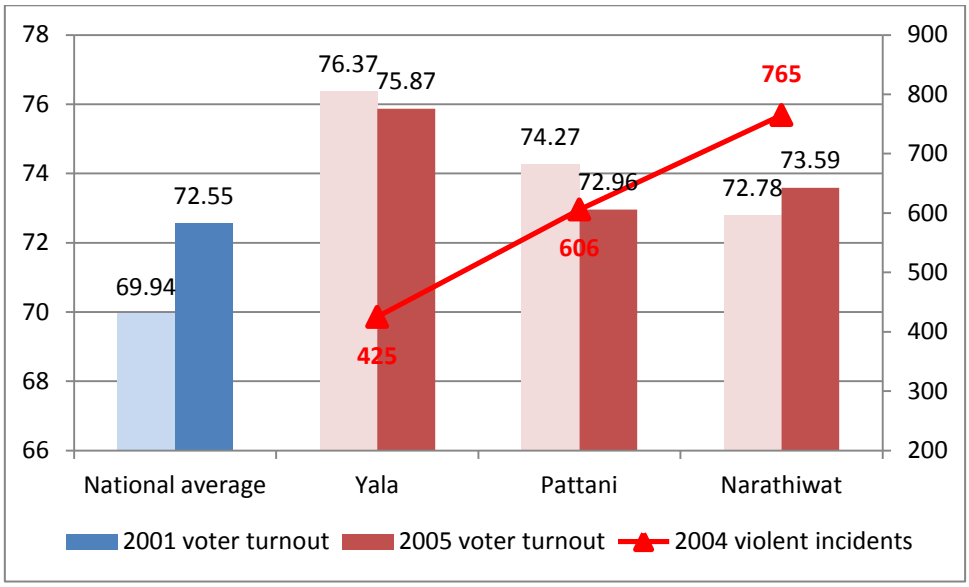
> I think most voters in the three southernmost provinces considered both political ideology of the political party and the qualifications of a candidate when voting. They used to vote for the

[66] Interview, a lecturer from Pattani, February 2013.

> popular candidate, such as Wan Noor, who brought many benefits to the Malay-Muslims. After the political crisis of the Thai Rak Thai party and the violent incidents in 2004, voters changed (their selection criteria). The reason for the change was partly because local people did not agree with Thai Rak Thai's political ideology (toward the Lower South conflict), so it increased the number of supporters of the opposite party, the Democrat party.

Even though many Malay-Muslim voters had faith in the Wadah members for many years, the inability in dealing with conflict and violence, despite having political position and power in the Thai cabinet, upset many voters, who had high expectations of the Wadah MPs. The conflict and violence led many Malay-Muslims to believe the Wadah group was not reliable for them anymore. The good relationship between the Wadah group and its voters thus came to an end.

Figure 4-2: Comparison chart between casualties of violent incidents in 2004 and voter turnout of the general election in 2001 and 2005 by provinces



Sources: Voter turnout in 2001 and 2005 was from Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

The number of violent attacks in 2004 was adapted from Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "ความรุนแรงเชิงโครงสร้างหรือโครงสร้างความรุนแรงในจังหวัดชายแดนใต้" **["**Structural Violence or Structure of Violence in the Southern Border Provinces 2004-2005**"],** Commissioned research report submitted to the National Reconciliation Commission, February 1, 2006, p.12-13.

The level of political participation through elections declined in 2005 in some provinces of the Lower South. Whereas the national average of voter turnout increased from 69.94% in 2001 to 72.55% in 2005, voter turnout in Yala and Pattani decreased to 75.93% and 72.95%, respectively, still slightly higher than the national average. The ongoing conflict and violence could possibly make people feel unsafe to go out to the polls. Higher risks in voting need higher incentives to go to vote. If voters did not believe in their representative and thought there was no good choice of candidate, they would rather avoid risks, stay at home and not bother to vote. As one voter expressed their disappointment, "I saw no interesting candidate I wanted to vote for. I thought I better stay at home as I saw no point to

go out for vote during this (dangerous) kind of situation[67]." So, a decrease of voter turnout in this election, on the one hand, might be because of fear, on the other hand, it might be because the former MPs, including Wadah, upset their voters. Some voters then decided not to go to vote.

However, voter turnout in Narathiwat demonstrated the opposite interesting result. Despite the decrease of voter turnout in Yala and Pattani, Narathiwat, where the violent incidents occurred most frequently (765 violent incidents) among the three provinces in 2004[68], was the only province among the three Malay-Muslim majority provinces where voter turnout increased from 72.78% in 2001 to 73.59% in 2005 (see

[67] Interview, a voter from Pattani, February 2013.

[68] The 2005 national election was held on 6 February, so the statistical data on violent attacks in 2004 was taken into consideration, instead of the record in 2005.

Figure 4-2).

Table 4-3: Comparison table between casualties of violent incidents in 2004 and voter turnout of the general election in 2001 and 2005 by constituencies

Yala				
Consti-tuecy	**Districts**	**Voter turnout 2001**	**Voter turnout 2005**	**Violent incidents 2004**
1	Mueang Yala (not including Po Seng, Bannang Sareng, and Bu Di subdistricts)	78.5	75.05	133
2	Kabang, Raman, Yaha (not including Patae subdistrict), and Mueang Yala (only Po Seng, Bannang Sareng, and Bu Di subdistricts)	76.64	76.01	94
3	Betong, Than To, Bannang Sata, Yaha (only Patae subdistrict), and Krong Pinang	74.02	76.5	197
Pattani				
1	Mueang Pattani (not including Paka Harang and Puyut subdistricts), and Yaring (not include Charang, Saban, Tolang, Tanyong Chueng-nga, Ba Loi, Tanyong Dalo, Manangyong, and Nongrad subdistricts)	75.06	74.53	199
2	Mae Lan, Khok Pho, Nong chik, and Mueang Pattani (only Paka Harang and Puyut subdistricts)	75.1	74.73	136
3	Kapho, Mai Kaen, Sai Buri, Pannare, andYaring (only Charang, Saban, Tolang, Tanyong Chueng-nga, Ba Loi, Tangyong Dalo, Manangyong, and Nongrad subdistricts)	77.5	76.6	134
4	Mayo, Thung Yang Daeng, and Yarang	69.25	65.97	134
Narathiwat				
1	Mueang Narathiwat and Tak Bai	72.41	73.37	140
2	Su-ngai Padi, Su-ngai Kolok, and Waeng	69.95	68.91	178
3	Sukhirin, Chanae, Ra-ngae, and Cho-airong	70.31	72.48	244
4	Si Sakhon, Rueso, Yi-ngo, and Bacho	78.92	79.53	192

Sources: Voter turnout in 2001 and 2005 was from Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

The number of violent attacks in 2004 was adapted from Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "ความรุนแรงเชิงโครงสร้างหรือโครงสร้างความรุนแรงในจังหวัดชายแดนใต้" ["Structural Violence or Structure of Violence in the Southern Border Provinces 2004-2005"], Commissioned research report submitted to the National Reconciliation Commission, February 1, 2006, p.12-13.

Remark: 1. Number of violent incidents is based on the whole district
2. There were 1, 3, and 11 violent incidents in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, respectively, that could not specify the incident locations.

Interestingly, if we consider each constituency, the result, as demonstrated in Table 4-3, showed that political participation through elections tended to increase in the area that had more frequent violent attacks. For example, Constituency 3 of Yala province had the most frequent violent attacks in Yala in 2004 (197 violent incidents), but, despite a decrease

in voter turnout in other constituencies, Constituency 3 was the only constituency in Yala where voter turnout increased from the 2001 election. Similarly, the violent incidents in Narathiwat occurred most frequently at Constituency 3 (244 violent incidents), where voter turnout in 2005 increased the most in the province (increased by 2.17% from 70.31% in 2001 to 72.48% in 2005).

Therefore, when considering voter turnout and casualties of violent incidents, data supports the fundamental hypothesis of this study that the conflict and violence did not undermine political participation of voters in the Deep South. On the contrary, for some voters, especially those living in the high violence conflict areas, the conflict and violence that occurred in their hometown pushed them to participate more in politics. As one Malay-Muslim voter from Pattani said, "I want it (the conflict and violence) to stop and I believe voting is one of the most likely ways to bring change to my hometown[69]."

The conflict and violence after 2004 not only increasingly motivated most people in the conflct areas to participate in elections but also raise their political awareness and changed their voting behavior. Due to the increasing violence after 2004, people in the conflict areas started to observe and question the Thai government's performance in solving the violence. They began to pay more attention to the state's policies regarding the conflict and violence in the three provinces. Also, critics from academia and reports of the media towards the government's aggressive policies on the South magnified political interests of local people[70]. Although their enthusiasm was perhaps less because of the new yet unattractive Democrat candidates and the disappointing performances of the Thai Rak Thai candidates, the upsurge of violence may have contributed to good turnout anyway. The high rate of voter turnout in 2005 showed that the ongoing conflict and violence could not

[69] Interview, a Malay-Muslim voter in Pattani, February 2013.

[70] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, September 2012.

discourage electoral participation of many voters. “Even with rumors of potential bombings on the election date, most local people in my village still went to vote. The violent incidents did not affect our voting,” said one university student from Pattani[71].

The nationwide popularity of Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party had begun to weaken by early 2006. There were massive demonstrations between the red-shirt or the pro-Thaksin (the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship) and the yellow-shirt or the anti-Thaksin (the People's Alliance for Democracy) groups throughout the country. Thaksin then decided to dissolve the House of Representatives and the next election was scheduled for 2 April 2006, which was just about one year after the previous election in 2005. The opposition parties (the Democrat, Chart Thai, and Mahachon parties) decided to boycott this election. Voter turnout of the election in April 2006 decreased nationwide to 64.76% from 72.55% in the previous election. Moreover, since the major opposition parties did not send candidates to this election, most constituencies had only one candidate. Voters had limited choices of candidates, so the percentage of people who chose “no vote” significantly increased from 2.29% in the 2005 general election to 33.14% in the 2006 election. The percentage of voided ballots also increased from 5.99% in 2005 to 13.03% in 2006[72].

For the conflict area in the Deep South, the political conflict between pro- and anti-Thaksin groups was associated with a decrease in political participation through elections in the region. Voter turnout for the 2006 election in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat decreased to about 60%. Despite many violent incidents on the election day of the 2006 general election

[71] Interview, a university student in Pattani, September 2012.

[72] Many of the voided ballots in the 2006 national elections were intentionally destroyed in order to protest the election. Dr. Chaiyan Chaiyaporn, Political Science Professor at Chulalongkorn University, was the first who tore his voting card to demonstrate civil disobedience (*Ar-raya Khad Kheun*) against the Thaksin regime and the April 2 election. Many voters followed his action by tearing voting cards on the April 2 elections and by-elections in 2006.

by suspected militants aimed at stopping people from participating through voting[73], some Malay-Muslim voters did not consider the violent incidents by militants as an obstacle to voting. According to the president of Narathiwat's kamnan and phuyaiban association, the boredom with politics due to the political conflict between the Red and Yellow groups and the limited choices of election candidates were instead the main reasons for a decrease of voter turnout and the unusually high rate of votes for "no vote" and voided ballots in the 2006 election (*Manager*, 6 April 2006).

The political conflict originating from the capital of the country and expanding nationwide affected general voters in different ways. For some voters who disagreed with the government, they might have ignored elections and decided not to participate in voting. However, many voters in the Far South, who disliked the government and the Thai Rak Thai party, went to the poll to express their political opinions through elections. As shown in Table 4-4, all the winning candidates from the Thai Rak Thai party in all constituencies of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat received less votes than the "no vote" option. In addition, the voided ballots were higher than votes of the first-place candidates in Pattani and some constituencies of Narathiwat. More interestingly, almost all of the Thai Rak Thai candidates (8 from 12 candidates) had been elected in the 2001 national elections. The failure of the Thaksin government policies that resulted in an increase of violent incidents in 2005[74] seemingly disappointed many voters in the conflict areas. So, choosing not to vote for the Thai Rak Thai

[73] There were several violent incidents on 2 April 2006 in some polling units of the three southern border provinces, including the bombing at the polling unit of Cho-airong district in Narathiwat (*Manager*, 2 April 2006), the intimidation by unknown groups, who threatened people in the markets at Narathiwat and Pattani to not go to vote (Manager, 2 April 2006), suspected bombs in Pattani (*Komchadluek*, 2 April 2006), and the rumors of possible attacks by the Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) armed group in seven districts of Narathiwat, and there were many election officers at Narathiwat who withdrew from their positions due to the fear of violence (*BEC news*, 22 April 2006).

[74] According to the Deep South Incident Database, the violent incidents in the southernmost provinces increased from 1,832 incidents in 2004 to 2,174 incidents in 2005.

candidates was one of the channels that many Malay-Muslim voters could use to seek a change of government policy[75]

Table 4-4: The April 2, 2006 unofficial election results in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat

Province	Consti-tuency	Number of candidates	The first-place candidate	Votes of the first-place candidate	"No Vote" ballots	Void ballots
Yala	1	1	Phairot Chaleawsak (TRT)	12,090	42,055	8,838
	2	1	Sukarno Matha (TRT)	25,354	27,596	19,411
	3	1	Burhanuddin Useng (TRT)	18,411	33,577	15,393
Pattani	1	1	Wairot Phiphitphakdi (TRT)	12,323	38,512	14,707
	2	1	Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong(TRT)	9,196	41,256	17,480
	3	2	Sommart Jehna (TRT)	14,238	34,354	18,013
	4	2	Muk Sulaiman (TRT)	15,358	22,201	16,268
Narathiwat	1	1	Areepen Utarasint (TRT)	16,996	35,394	15,165
	2	1	Suthiphan Sririkanon (TRT)	10,774	30,393	13,898
	3	1	Najmuddin Uma (TRT)	16,099	21.359	10,699
	4	1	Taofik Sama-ae (TRT)	16,130	29,759	19,004
	5	1	Samat Walong (TRT)	17,630	22,316	13,508

Source: *Matichon*, 4 April 2006

The Constitutional court declared the 2006 general election invalid due to irregularities which it considered unconstitutional, including the unfairness of the scheduled election date, the positioning of voting booths violating voter privacy, the hiring of smaller parties by the TRT party to contest the election, and the wrongdoings of local election commissions (*Manager*, 8 May 2006).

[75] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, September 2012.

Subsequently, the military seized power in a coup, led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, on September 19, 2006. The coup leaders appointed General Surayud Chulanont prime minister of the military government in 2006. Under the new military government, a new constitution was drafted, the first constitution that allowed people to vote to approve the draft of the constitution[76]. A national referendum was held on 19 August 2007. Voter turnout was 57.61% nationwide, with 56.69% voting to approve and 41.37% voting against the draft of the constitution[77]. Thus, only about 35% voted for the constitution (out of all eligible voters).

[76] A provision for a national referendum was legislated in the 1949 Constitution, the 1968 Constitution, the 1974 Constitution, and the 1997 Constitution. However, the first three constitutions allowed a national referendum only for amendments to the constitution. The 1997 Constitution allowed a national referendum on the draft constitution, but only if the draft constitution was rejected by the National Assembly. Since the National Assembly adopted the draft, the national referendum for the 1997 Constitution was unnecessary. See Tom Ginsburg 2009, "Constitutional afterlife: The continuing impact of Thailand's postpolitical constitution," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 7(1), p. 91.

[77] For more information on national referendum (in Thai), see 'การออกเสียงประชามติ' [National referendum], < http://www.ect.go.th/th/?page_id=759>, accessed 10 September 2015.

Table 4-5: Comparison table between national referendum results on the draft of the 2007 constitution and casualties of violent incidents in 2007 in some red zone districts in the three southern provinces

District	Voter turnout	Violent incidents
Yala (Voter turnout 58.78%)		
Raman	60.41	109
Yaha	60.55	81
Pattani (Voter turnout 55.48%)		
Mueang Pattani	58.4	75
Khok Pho	62.7	60
Narathiwat (Voter turnout 57.07%)		
Rueso	57.36	144
Ra-ngae	58.63	142

Sources: Voter turnout of the 2007 national referendum **is** from "รายงาน ชายแดนใต้หลังประชามติรัฐธรรมนูญ: พื้นที่การเมืองที่แปลกแยก" ["Report on the southern border provinces after national referendum on the draft of the constitution: the divided political area"], *Prachatai*, August 24, 2007, < http://prachatai.com/journal/2007/08/13947>, accessed 5 September 2016.

The number of violent attacks in 2007 is from "4 ปีไฟใต้คร่า 2,848 ชีวิต" ["4 years of the unrest killed 2,848"], *Manager*, January 5, 2008, < http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9510000001439&TabID=3&>, accessed 5 September 2016.

For the southernmost provinces, even though there were some people who tried to convince the locals not to vote or approve the constitution (*Manager*, 21 August 2007), the majority of the Malay-Muslims were not persuaded. Voter turnout in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat was 58.78%, 55.48%, and 57.07% respectively, which was near the national average. Interestingly, as shown in Table 4-5, voter turnout in some high-violent-incidents districts was even higher than the provincial and national average.

Table 4-6: The national referendum results on the draft of the 2007 constitution in the Southern region

Province	Approve	Reject	Void	Voter turnout
Chumphon	92.13	6.73	1.14	62.02
Trang	91.20	7.44	1.36	65.40
Nakhon Si Thammarat	90.96	7.69	1.35	51.69
Ranong	90.72	7.91	1.37	59.87
Surat Thani	90.69	8.02	1.29	58.78
Songkhla	90.59	7.97	1.43	64.11
Krabi	89.55	8.96	1.49	63.93
Patthalung	89.51	9.05	1.45	64.24
Phuket	88.71	9.81	1.48	58.53
Phang Nga	85.74	12.73	1.53	64.15
Satun	81.97	16.23	1.79	62.59
Narathiwat	73.61	22.03	4.37	57.07
Pattani	71.79	22.15	6.05	55.48
Yala	69.83	24.79	5.38	58.78

Source: Thai Politics Research Center (THPRC)

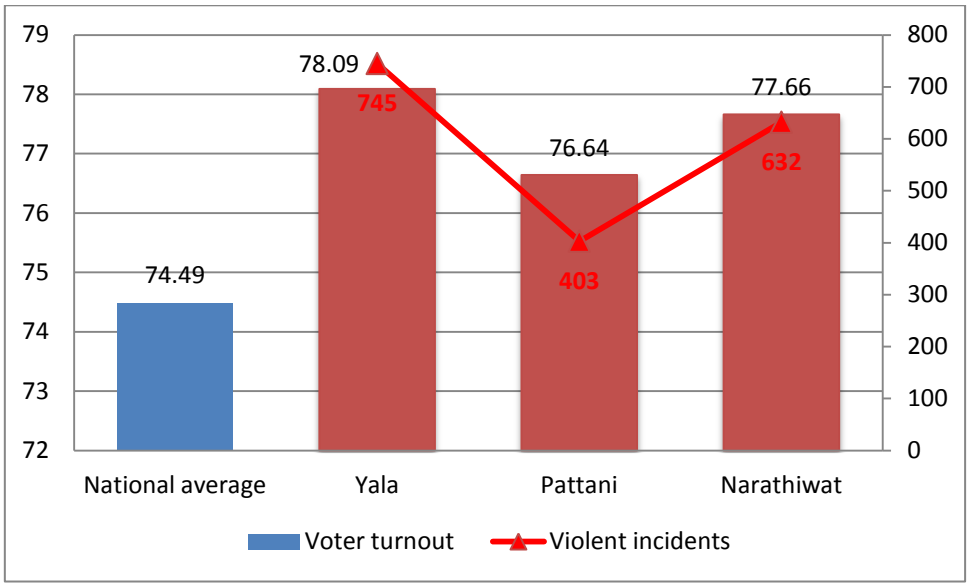
The national referendum result was significantly different in each region. Fewer than 40% of voters in the Northeastern region, Thaksin's base, supported the draft, whereas more than 85% of voters in the South, a stronghold of the Democrat party, voted to approve the constitution (Thai Politics Research Center 2007). Interestingly, when considering the results in the South, the three southern border provinces, Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, were the three provinces of the southern region that voted least to approve the draft.

As shown in Table 4-6, around 70% of the voters in the three southern border provinces agreed with the draft constitution, while about 90% of voters in other southern provinces voted to approve the draft. The result proved at some level that even though many voters in the three southern border provinces voted for the Democrat candidates in the former election, the reason of voting for the Democrat party, which supported the constitution, for many voters in the Deep South was different from voters in other southern provinces. The support for the Democrat party in other southern provinces was so high that voters tended to agree with the Democrat party on everything. However, the degree of supportfor the Democrat party in the Deep South was not as high. So, even though the Democrat party supported the draft of this constitution, some Malay-Muslim voters voted against it. Even though there were some points in the draft of the 2007 constitution that left some voters in the Deep South dissatisfied[78], a high rate of political participation in the national referendum tells us that many Malay-Muslims still believed in political participation as a way to express their own views to the Thai government.

After the national referendum and promulgation of the 2007 Constitution, an election date was set for 23 December 2007. The first election after the promulgation of the 2007 Constitution showed a higher rate of political participation through elections nationwide. National voter turnout slightly increased from 72.55% in 2005 to 74.49% in 2007. Many voters in the Deep South participated in the election. When considering voter turnout in the Lower south, the three southernmost provinces also had an increased rate of voter turnout and the rate was higher than the national average. Voter turnout in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat was 78.09%, 76.64%, and 77.66%, respectively (see *Figure 4-3*).

[78] For example, Srisompob Jitpiromsri, a renowned academic in the Deep South, commented the constitutional draft did not give enough importance to local administration, which he believed would help in lessening the southern border problems of conflict and violence (*Prachatai*, 20 May 2007).

Figure 4-3: Comparison between casualties of violent incidents and voter turnout of the general election in 2007



Sources: Voter turnout was collected from Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

The number of violent incidents is from Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "*Sixth Year of the Southern Fire: Dynamics of Insurgency and Formation of the New Imagined Violence*", Deep South Watch, March 10, 2010, p.8. <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/730>, accessed 30 September 2015.

As shown in Figure 4-3, voter turnout in the three southern border provinces also illustrates the relationship between the violence and political participation through elections. According to a report by Srisompob Jitpiromsri (2010: 8), the violent incidents in 2007 occurred most frequently in Yala (745 incidents), where voter turnout was the highest (78.09%). In addition, Yala was the only province among the three provinces where violent incidents increased, from 425 casualties in 2004 to 745 casualties in 2007, whereas violent incidents in Pattani and Narathiwat decreased from 606 and 765 incidents in 2004 to 403 and 632 incidents in 2007, respectively (see Figure 4-2 and Figure 4-3).The high rate of voter turnout in Yala showed that the conflict and violence did not impede voters from political participation, but it instead motivated their greater desire of voting. One Thai-Buddhist participant from Mueang district of Yala stressed that the conflict and violence increased her

desire to participate. She said, "I know that my vote cannot help (changing anything) much because politics in Yala is quite stable and has hardly changed for many years. However, I still want to participate in voting and I will vote because I want the conflict to stop[79]." Her statement regarding stability is true for the urban area of Yala, especially Mueang district, where Prasert Phongsuwansiri continuously won election since 1995.

After 3 years of the upsurge in insurgency with no progress towards an effective solution, the former MPs either under the Thai Rak Thai party or the Democrat party, had failed to prove their effectiveness in solving the conflict and violence in the Deep South. The disappointment in the former governments and MPs was expressed through voting in the 2007 national election. Many voters gave a chance to new players in the MP competition rather than voting for the same old candidates, such as Den Tohmeena and Muk Sulaiman of the Wadah group, who were long-time players in Far South politics, running under the new roof of Palang Prachachon party. Den contested in Constituency 1 of Pattani[80], but he could only attain fourth place and lost the election. Similarly, Muk contested in Pattani Constituency 2 and could only gain sixth place. Moreoever, whereas almost all seats in the 2005 general election were won by the Democrat candidates, the 2007 general election led to more diversity of political parties and almost half of the winning candidates were new faces who had never been elected before (See Table 4-7).

[79] Interview, a Thai-Buddhist voter from Yala, November 2012.

[80] The constituency system was changed according to the 2007 Constitution. Constituencies were larger than former elections to decrease vote-buying and money politics in elections. For the change of constituency system in the 2007 general election, see the Royal Thai Government Gazette, vol 124, part 76A, 1 November 2005, pp. 15-44.

Table 4-7: The results of the 2007 general elections by province

Province	Name	Religion	Political party	Re-elected / 1st time elected
Yala	Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Buddhist	Democrat	Re-elected
	Abdulkarim Dengrakina	Muslim	Democrat	1st time elected
	Sukarno Matha	Muslim	Palang Prachachon	1st time elected
Pattani	Anwar Salaeh	Muslim	Democrat	Re-elected
	Ismael Benibrohim[81]	Muslim	Democrat	Re-elected
	Nikmukta Vaba	Muslim	Pheu Pandin	1st time elected
	Yusri Susaror	Muslim	Pheu Pandin	1st time elected
Narathiwat	Waemahadi Waeda-oh	Muslim	Pheu Pandin	1st time elected
	Jehrrming Tohtayong	Muslim	Democrat	Re-elected
	Watchara Yawohasan	Muslim	Chart Thai	1st time elected
	Kuheng Yawohasan (dismissed[82])	Muslim	Chart Thai	Re-elected
	Ni-aris Jetaphiwat (replacement)	Muslim	Chart Thai	1st time elected
	Najmuddin Umar	Muslim	Palang Prachachon	Re-elected

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

As shown in Table 4-7, the clearest evidence was in Narathiwat where the five winning candidates of Narathiwat were affiliated with four different political parties, including Pheu Pandin, Democrat, Chart Thai, and Palang Prachachon parties and two of them, Waemahadi Waeda-oh and Watchara Yawohasan, were elected for the first time[83]. A Malay-Muslim voter from Yala expressed that due to unimpressive performances of MPs and the government's unsuccessful policies toward the South violence, many voters attentively waited for the election. They wanted to vote not only to choose a representative but also to "vote to not vote" for the same candidate or political party, who they voted for last time but could not deliver policies as promised. So, participating in the election, for some voters, can be used as a way to take revenge on some representative they felt upset with[84].

[81] Ismael Yidoromae, a Pattani MP in 2005, changed his surname to Ismael Ben-Ibrohim

[82] Kuheng Yawohasan, as an executive member of the disbanded Chart Thai party, was banned from participating in politics for five years from 2008.

[83] Ni-aris Jetaphiwat won later in a by-election.

[84] Interview, a Malay-Muslim voter from Yala, February 2013.

The variety of political parties caused difficulty in policy formation. Even though the MPs received mandates from their voters, the differences in policies and the lack of unity among the MPs of different political parties, in a mix of both government and opposition parties, led to difficulties in delivering their policies or entering the cabinet. So, many Malay-Muslim voters probably took a lesson from the 2007 election. Consequently, the election results in the 2011 national election were not as divergent as the former election. Almost all the winning candidates in the following election in 2011 were from the Democrat party, except in Pattani where two of the winning candidates were from the Matubhum and Bhumjaithai parties. However, the victory of the Democrat party in 2011 was not as clear cut as the 2005 national election, except in some constituencies, mostly in urban areas, that had significant numbers of Thai and Thai-Chinese Buddhists, who were loyal to the Democrat party (see Table 4-8).

Table 4-8: Election results of the 2005 and 2011 general elections

Province	Consti-tuency	The first place			The second place			Vote difference
		Candidate	Political party	vote	Candidate	Political party	vote	
The 2005 general election								
Yala	**1**	Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Democrat	33,393	Phairoj Chaleawsak	Thai Rak Thai	20,336	13,057
	2	Abdulkarim Tengrakina	Democrat	23,212	Phaisan yingsaman	Thai Rak Thai	19,314	3,898
	3	Narong Duding	Democrat	38,040	Burhanuddin Useng	Thai Rak Thai	22,162	15,878
Pattani	**1**	Anwar Salaeh	Democrat	28,554	Wairot Phipitpakdi	Thai Rak Thai	15,663	12,891
	2	Ismael Yidoromae	Democrat	41,968	Udomphan Maksuwan	Chart Thai	14,559	27,409
	3	Mohamadyasi Yusong	Democrat	33,385	Sommart Jehna	Thai Rak Thai	20,763	12,622
	4	Zata Arwaekuechi	Democrat	28,769	Muk Sulaiman	Thai Rak Thai	13,921	14,848
Narathiwat	**1**	Jehrrming Tohtayong	Democrat	33,927	Pornpich Pattanakullert	Thai Rak Thai	16,329	17,598
	2	Surachet Wae-Asae	Democrat	36,653	Samat Walong	Thai Rak Thai	24,717	11,936
	3	Kuheng Yawohasan	Chart Thai	23,858	Najmuddin Umar	Thai Rak Thai	22,189	1,669
	4	Adul Saheebatu	Democrat	39,497	Sa-Udi Bhumibutr	Thai Rak Thai	22,801	16,696
The 2011 general election								
Yala	**1**	Prasert Phongsuwansiri	Democrat	40,190	Erafarn Sulong	Pheu Thai	12,202	27,988
	2	Abdulkarim Tengrakina	Democrat	28,385	Sukarno Matha	Pheu Thai	28,337	48
	3	Narong Duding	Democrat	33,433	Burhanuddin Useng	Pheu Thai	21,498	11,935
Pattani	**1**	Anwar Salaeh	Democrat	28,733	Arun Benjalak	Bhumjaithai	24,301	4,432
	2	Ismael Benibrohim	Democrat	38,164	Muhammad Arifeen Japakiya	Matubhum	20,152	18,012
	3	Anumat Susaror	Matubhum	27,142	Nikmukta Vaba	Bhumjaithai	25,865	1,277
	4	Sommut Benjaluk	Bhumjaithai	21,510	Zata Arwaekuechi	Democrat	19,735	1,755
Narathiwat	**1**	Kuasem Kujinaming	Democrat	37,903	Phaisan Toryib	Matubhum	24,286	13,617
	2	Surachet Wae-Asae	Democrat	26,638	Humdun Arsae	Bhumjaithai	21,770	4,868
	3	Ramree Mamah	Democrat	24,647	Ni-aris Jetaphiwat	Chart Thai Pattana	22,880	1,767
	4	Jehrrming Tohtayong	Democrat	28,498	Kamolsak Leewamoh	Matubhum	28,019	479

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

When comparing between the two elections in 2005 and 2011 when the Democrat party won almost all parliamentary seats in the Lower South, as shown in Table 8, votes for the Democrat candidates decreased from the 2005 general election in many constituencies and the election results between the first and second place in 2011 were closer than those in 2005. Comparing to the national election in 2005, the difference between the first- and the second-place candidates in 2005 was much less. The vote differences between the first two place candidates were more than eleven thousands votes in most constituencies, except Yala Constituency 2 and Narathiwat Constituency 3 where the second-placed candidates were only behind by 3,898 and 1,669, respectively. On the other hand, the difference in the 2011 general election between the first- and second-place candidates was small. The vote differences in seven out of eleven constituencies were less than five thousand votes. Moreover, the results were almost equal in constituency 2 of Yala and constituency 4 of Narathiwat, where the Democrat candidates won by only 48 and 479 votes, respectively.

Based on conversations with local people during field research, the popularity of the Democrat party in the conflict areas of the Far South was decreasing, especially among the younger generation. Some of them criticized that the Democrat candidates mostly offered repetitious and uninteresting policies, but they preferred to see some innovative policies in response to the violent crisis in the South from the candidates. A young voter from Pattani expressed that:

> Most local people in my village vote for personal qualification or political party, but I place more importance on policies. I voted for Pheu Thai Party, while my family always voted for the Democrat Party. I liked Pheu Thai's policies because they were new and interesting. Although many people criticized that they were populist policies, I did not mind. My hometown is in crisis and unstable, we need a representative who can bring change. The Democrat's candidates, either new or old face, just continued old policies.

The above statement was at least partly true. When looking at policies of the election campaign in 2011, almost all parties gave more importance to the conflict and violence in the South. The idea of decentralization and some form of autonomy was widely debated. In the past, the discussion about regional autonomy was a sensitive issue, as whoever mentioned autonomy was suspected by the Thai state of being an insurgent. However, the model of autonomy became one of the main policies in the political campaign of the 2011 general election in the Deep South, but not for the Democrat party.

If we consider the election results in 2011 together with the campaign policies of the political parties, there were two opposite approaches regarding autonomy and decentralization proposed by political parties. The first group opposed the concept of regional autonomy; the only party that strongly disagreed with any form of regional autonomy was the Democrat party. Even though the Democrat party promoted decentralization, the concept of a Special Administration Region or any form of regional autonomy had never been accepted by the Democrat party since General Chawalit suggested this idea to the Abhisit government. Instead, the Democrat party supported decentralization by improving the function of the region's SBPAC.

The second group of parties, including the Pheu Thai, Matubhum, and Chart Thai Pattana parties, supported the concept of regional autonomy and wanted to provide some form of elected regional governance, although the specific forms of regional autonomy were different in the details. The Pheu Thai party supported decentralization in the form of a Special Administrative Region, or Nakorn Pattani (Pattani City), with an elected governor and the party announced it would abolish the SBPAC; the Matubhum party also advocated the idea of elected regional governance by offering to set up a Special Administrative Department *(Thabuang)* to manage the unrest and administer the Lower South. The

Mathubhum party also offered direct election of the governors in the three provinces (*Reuters*, 23 June 2011). Similar to the Pheu Thai and the Matubhum parties, the Chart Thai Pattani party, a successor to the Chart Thai party, supported decentralization and proposed to set up a one stop government service center for the southern border provinces in order to take care of the Malay-Muslims in all matters. The Center would have authority to self-manage security and develop a budget on its own (*Deep South Watch*, 25 June 2011).

The Bhumjaithai party[85] was not in either group since the party neither supported nor disagreed with the concept of regional autonomy and did not include this in their election campaign. The party considered implementing a model of regional autonomy was impossible to do within four years so the Bhumjaithai party offered to tackle the injustice and drug problems as a priority concern (*Deep South Watch*, 1 July 2011).

The close race of the MP contest in 2011 between those who supported and opposed the ideas of regional autonomy corresponded to the survey of votes in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat in 2010 by James Klein (2010: 115-125). The results of the survey showed that people in the Deep South were divided into quite equal portions between favorable and unfavorable views of the idea of regional autonomy[86]. The election and survey results demonstrated that voters in the conflict areas used participation through elections as a safe method to express their political opinions, especially on sensitive issues such as autonomy and decentralization. Accordingly, their expressions through voting were heard by political actors and their voices helped initiate policy formation. The high rate of political participation through elections of Malay-Muslim voters was one of the reasons for this change. The desire

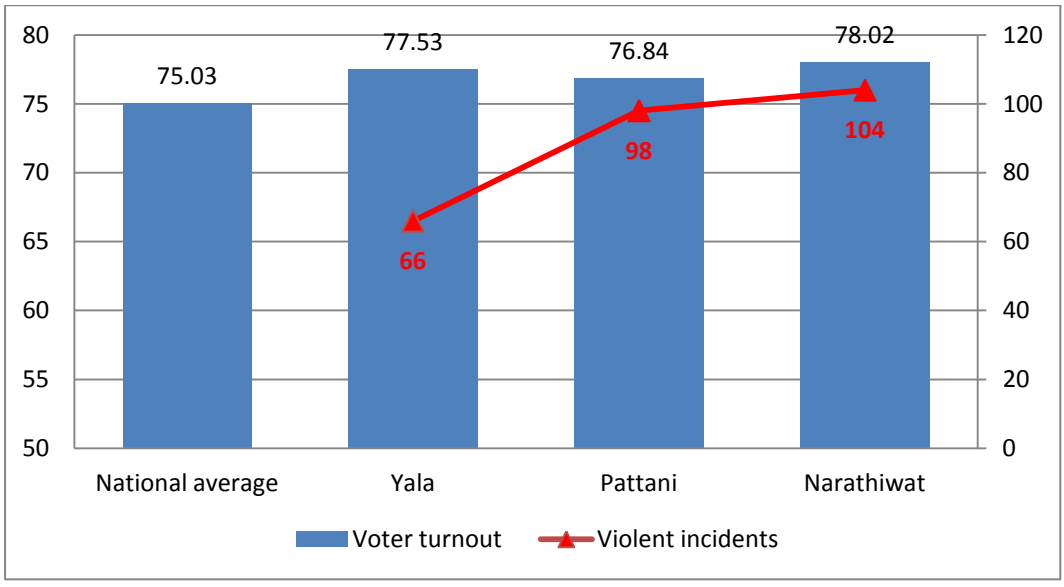
[85] The Bhumjaithai party was founded in 2009 and many members were from 'Friends of Newin Group', a political faction in the Palang Prachachon party led by Newin Chidchob.

[86] From the survey, 51% of participants rejected the idea of consolidating the three provinces into one administrative area and 56% believed that having local self government would help lessening the southern conflict. For details of the survey, read James Klein 2010, *Democracy and Conflict in Southern Thailand: A Survey of the Thai Electorate in Yala, Narathiwas, and Pattani* (Bangkok: The Asia Foundation).

for decentralization and some form of regional autonomy has been discussed lightly but widely in the Deep South for many years but it has never been accepted by Thai governments. The high level of political participation of Malay-Muslims helped change things that used to be impossible to be less unlikely. The forbidden topic of regional autonomy was brought into discussions in public and became a main concern for political parties.

In terms of the level of electoral participation, similar to past elections, voter turnout of the 2011 general election in the three southern border provinces was higher than the national average, as shown in Figure 4-4

Figure 4-4*:* Comparison between casualties of violent incidents from October 2010 to February 2011 and voter turnout of the 2011 general election



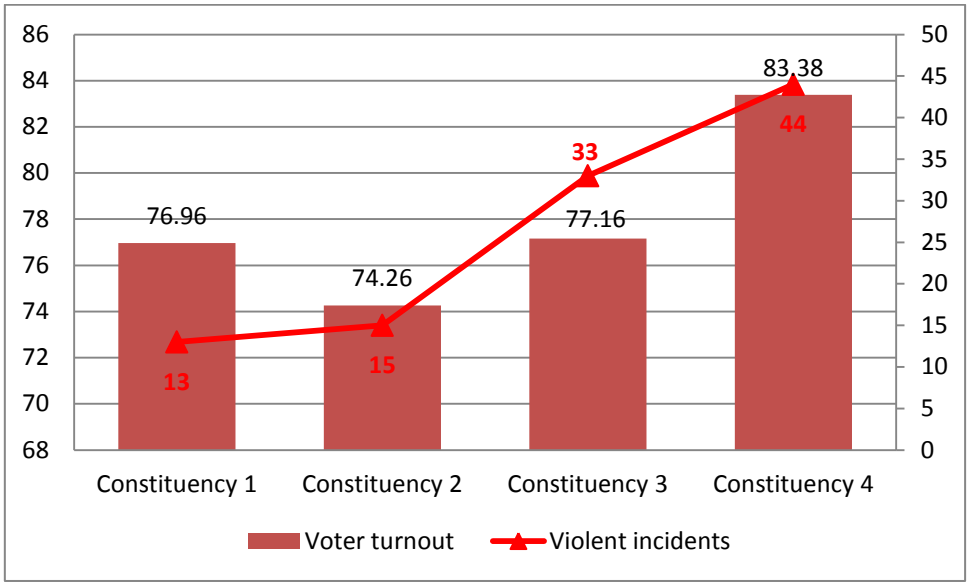
Sources: Voter turnout was collected from Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

Number of violent incidents was adapted from the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center. <http://isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/item/1982-5.html>, accessed 10 September 2016.

If we consider voter turnout of the 2011 election together with the statistical data on number of violent incidents in southern Thailand, the data illustrates more interesting results. According to the data collected between October 2010 and February 2011 by the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center (SBPPOC)[87], the violent incidents occurred most often in Narathiwat (104 violent incidents) where voter turnout was 78.02%, the highest rate among these three southern provinces. The analysis can be extended deeper into each constituency of Narathiwat. The report from SBPPOC also revealed the relationship between the violence and political participation through election in the conflict areas. As shown in Figure 4-5, Narathiwat Constituency 4 was the constituency with the highest frequency of violence (44 violent inceidents) but the constituency had the highest rate of voter turnout in Narathiwat which was 83.38% in 2011. On the other hand, Narathiwat Constituency 2 had the lowest rate of voter turnout in the province (74.26%), while it had the second lowest frequency of violence.

[87] The 2011 general election was held on 3 July 2011, the statistical data from October 2010 to February 2011 was taken into account.

Figure 4-5: Comparison between casualties of violent incidents from October 2010 to February 2011 and voter turnout of the 2011 general election in Narathiwat by constituencies



Sources: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Number of violent incidents was adapted from the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center. <http://isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/item/1982-5.html>, accessed 10 September 2016.

Remark: Constituency 1 included 2 districts: Mueang and Tak Bai
Constituency 2 included 3 districts: Su-ngai Kolok, Su-ngai Padi, and Wang
Constituency 3 included 3 districts: Ra-ngae, Chanae, Cho-airong, and Sukhirin
Constituency 4 included 4 districts: Yi-ngo, Bacho, Rueso, and Srisakhon

The latest general election in Thailand was held on 2 January 2014 after Prime Minister Yingluck dissolved the parliament. However, the 2014 general election was opposed nationwide by a political group called People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), led by Suthep Thaugsuban, the former Democrat MP of Surat Thani and other Cabinet Ministers under past Democrat governments. The PDRC preferred to install an appointed People's Council to watch over political reform and corruption problems in the country before having an election. The Democrat party agreed with the PDRC on the point that Thailand was not ready to have an election at the time, so, similar to the national election in 2006, the

Democrat party boycotted this election by not sending election candidates in all constituencies. However, the viewpoint of the PDRC and the Democrat party was not unanimous and was opposed by many sides, especially the pro-government Red-shirt group, formally known as the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD). People in Thailand increasingly divided not only in Bangkok, but nationwide. Therefore, the 2014 general election was quite troublesome. There was chaos nationwide, especially at many polling stations before and on the election day. As a result, out of the total 375 constituencies, there were 5 constituencies in Bangkok and 42 constituencies in 9 provinces of southern Thailand that were unable to proceed with the election. The nine southern provinces included Songkhla, Trang, Patthalung, Phuket, Surat Thani, Krabi, Ranong, Phang Nga, and Chumphon.

Despite all the chaos in many provinces of Thailand, the three southern border provinces were able to run the election. However, there were some reports of disruptions in some constituencies in the three southern provinces. There were 46 polling units in 4 districts of Yala (Mueang, Kabang, Than To, and Betong) that were unable to proceed with the election because the polling units were surrounded by PDRC protestors (*Naewna*, 3 February 2557); polling unit 3 of Khok Pho district in Pattani's constituency 2 was also blocked, and rubber tires were burned on the route to the polling unit (*Manager*, 2 February 2014). In addition, there were bomb attacks in Pattani's Khok Pho district on the night before the election[88] (*Bangkok Post*, 2 February 2014). Narathiwat was the only province in the southern region where all polling units were able to run the election.

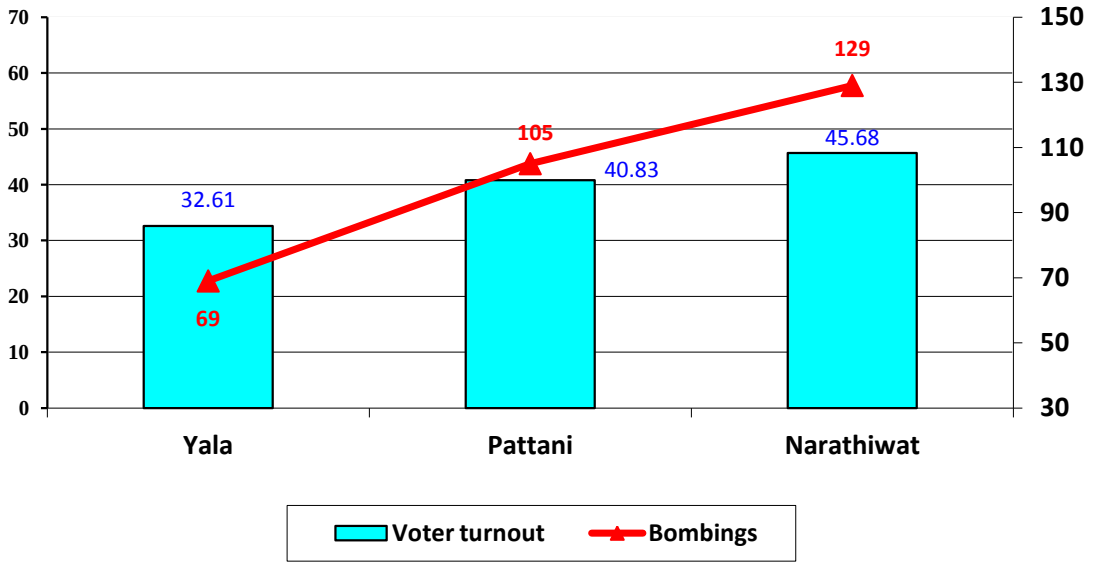
[88] The explosion killed three soldiers and one civilian, Jaktra Promkaew, an assistant chief of Khok Pho district and the head of polling unit 4 in Pattani's Constituency 2. However, the director of the Pattani election committee, Prapas Chainapong, personally believed the attack was not related to the election (*Bangkok Post*, 2 February 2014).

The voter turnout of the 2014 general election therefore varied widely, due to the political unrest from the anti-2014-election protestors. As shown in Figure 6, Narathiwat, the only province that had no closed polling unit, had the highest rate of voter turnout (45.68%), followed by Pattani (40.83%), where one polling unit was closed, and Yala (32.61%), where 46 polling units were blocked. Interestingly, when comparing voter turnout in 2014 and casualties of bomb attacks in the three southern provinces in 2013[89], the result again illustrated the relationship between violence and political participation through elections. According to the ISOC report between 1 January and 22 December 2013, bomb attacks occurred most often in Narathiwat (129 bomb attacks) where voter turnout in the 2014 general election was the highest and there was no serious attack in all polling units during the election. The least frequent bombings in 2013 were in Yala (69 bomb attacks), where the province had the most unrest during the 2014 election and 46 polling units had to be closed (see

[89] The 2014 national election was held on 2 February 2014, so the statistical data on bombings in 2013 was taken into consideration.

Figure 4-6).

Figure 4-6: ***Comparison between bomb attacks in 2013 and voter turnout of the 2014 general election (unofficial result)***



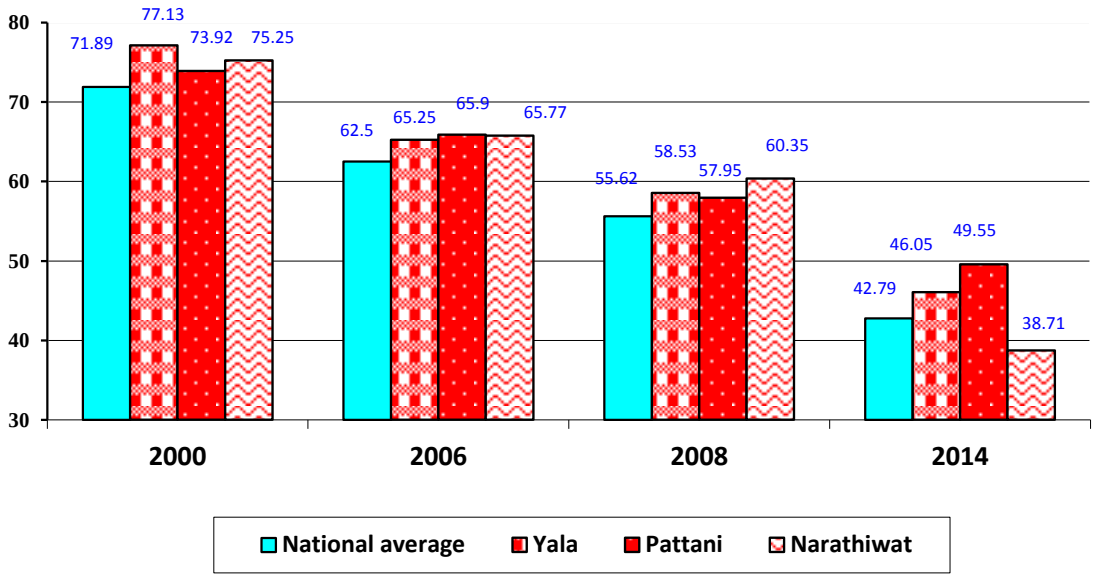
Sources: Voter turnout was collected from Manager, 3 February 2014. <http://www.manager.co.th/Politics/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9570000013300>, accessed 10 September 2016.
Bomb attacks data was collected from Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) Region 4 Forward Command. <http://isranews.org/isranews-all-data/isranews-data-south/item/26142-blast.html>, accessed 10 March 2016.

Although we cannot ignore that voting is likely a result of mixed motivations rather than a single motive, the comparisons between the violence and voter turnout strongly supports the hypothesis that political participation through national elections of the voters in the conflict areas of southern Thailand are related to the level of conflict and violence. The past national elections after 2004 showed that the ongoing conflict and violence did not destroy political activeness of voters in elections. On the contrary, the conflict and violence triggered more participation and enhanced the degree of political participation in the conflict areas of the Lower South. The conflict and violence not only increased their desire to vote but also made a significant impact in changing voters' electoral behavior to be more concerned with policy than political party or personal qualifications of a candidate.

Senate election in the Deep South

In earlier times, the Senate was indirectly elected or appointed by the government, military, or king. Despite its significant roles and power in the legislative process and check-and-balance system, the appointed Senates had often been criticized for being "mere military-dominated rubber stamps" to serve the will of governing elites (Chambers 2009: 11). Under the 1997 Constitution, the Senate or the upper house of the National Assembly of Thailand had been re-designed and became one of the most important and powerful actors under a bicameral system. Following the 1997 Constitution, Thailand's first Senate direct election was held on 4 March 2000 with high voter turnout nationwide, including in the Far South. The national average of voter turnout was 71.89% and the rates were even higher in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, as shown in Figure 4-7. However, the first Senate election was criticized for being problematic, expensive, and prolonged (Montesano 2001: 172). There were reports of election fraud and violation of election regulations in 35 provinces, although the three southern provinces were not on the list. As a result, the Election Commission had to organize by-elections four times and spend around 2,300 million baht of government budget to fill 200 senate positions in 2000.

Figure 4-7: Voter turnout of senate elections from 2000 to 2014



Source: The 2000, 2008, and 2014 data was official results from Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

The 2006 data was unofficial results published by Isranews, 20 April 2006 <http://wbns.oas.psu.ac.th/shownews.php?news_id=36643>, accessed 10 October 2015.

The second Senate election was held on 19 April 2006, after the senate completed its six-year term. However, voter turnout in the second Senate election decreased significantly nationwide from 71.89% to 62.5%. The decrease of voter turnout could be partly because of the political chaos and massive demonstrations of the Red-shirt and Yellow-shirt groups that impeded voters participating in elections. Despite the requirement of the 1997 constitution that the senate be a non-partison body in order to assure the neutrality of the Upper House, many Thai senators were criticized for being proxies who protected the interests of politicians. The Thai Media published a long list of senator candidates who had linkages with politicians[90]and called the Upper House "The siblings and husbands-and-wives assembly"

[90] For the list of senators who were accused of having relationships with politicians, see ASTV Manager Online, 'Perd Salaek phu samak Sor Wor tua prathet 49' [Uncovering the 2006 senate candidates], *Manager*, 12 April 2006, <http://www.manager.co.th/QOL/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9490000049348>, accessed 20 October 2015.

(*The Nation Weekend*, 16-22 December 1999) or "an Assembly of slaves" (*Thai Post*, 5 March 2000).

In the southern border provinces, the obstacles to political participation in the 2006 Senate election were not only the political conflict between the Red-shirt and the Yellow-shirt groups and the distrust of the senate candidates, but also violence on election day by suspected militants in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. There were bombings and shootings at 10 polling units in Yala and Narathiwat, targeting voting officers and ballot-card-vehicles, and scattering nails en route to a polling unit in Pattani, aiming to destroy the election and prevent southern voters from voting (*Isranews*, 20 April 2006). Five people were killed and another 13 were seriously injured (*Manager*, 29 August 2006). However, although voters in the conflict areas participated in the 2006 Senate election less than in the first Senate election in 2000, many voters still showed their interest in political participation through voting for the Senate by going out to the polls at a higher rate than people in other regions (see Figure 4-7).

The following Senate election was held on 2 March 2008. Regulations for the Senate election were changed under the 2007 constitution of Thailand. According to the new constitution, 76 senators, one for each province, were directly elected by voters and 74 senators were appointed from a wide range of professional groups. However, the Senate election in 2008 received less attention from electorates in the Lower South and nationwide. Despite the increasing rate of voter turnout in the MP election in December 2007, the Senate election, which was held about 2 months later, illustrated the opposite results. Whereas the voter turnout of the 2007 MP election in the three southern border provinces was almost 80% (see

Figure 4-2), the voter turnout of the 2008 Senate election was only about 60%, which was less than the voter turnout in the previous senate election in 2006 by about 7% (See Figure 4-6).

The most recent senate election was held on 30 March 2014 during the midst of political conflict and street protests by the anti-government group, the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC). The political conflict affected the pattern and level of political participation in the country. Some voters gave up their political participation through voting and decided to participate via street politics by joining the protests and political movements. As a result, the national average of voter turnout in the 2014 Senate election sharply decreased from 55.62% in 2008 to 42.79% in 2014. For the Lower South, voter turnout in the Senate election in 2014 also dropped, especially in Narathiwat. As shown in Figure 6, voter turnout in Narathiwat decreased to 38.71% from 60.35% in the 2008 senate election. This was the first time since the re-emergence of conflict and violence that voter turnout in Narathiwat was lower than the national average. The political participation of Narathiwat voters was undermined by violence on election day. There was a roadside bomb near the polling unit of Rueso district in Narathiwat which killed 2 policemen and injured 3 policemen who were travelling to provide security for a polling unit (*Bangkok Post*, 31 March 2014). Although the poll continued after the explosion, voters may have felt threatened in going to the polling station. As a result, political participation in the Senate election in Narathiwat remarkably declined in 2014.

If we consider the Senate elections from 2000 to 2014, we can see a significant decrease in political participation through Senate elections in the Lower South, as shown in Figure 4-7. However, when compared to the MP elections, despite the same fear of violence, voters in the conflict areas demonstrated more interest in participating in the MP elections than the Senate elections. Voter turnout of the MP election was on an upward trend and never

less than 70% after 2001, except in 2014 when some polling units could not be operated due to the political turmoil, while voters in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat participated in the Senate elections less and less in every election, despite the high rate of voter turnout in the first Senate election in 2000.

What caused this difference? Living in the midst of conflict and violence, voters were in more danger from violent incidents and conflict. Many people thus tended to be more selective in participating in political activity that they thought was worthwhile. It likely seemed to be that less democratic elections also led to less electoral participation. The senate elections were less democratic, at least in two particular ways; firstly, most senators, including in the Lower South, were criticized for being proxies and having linkage with politicians, such as Muktar Matha, Tuan Abdullah Dauddmareyo[91], Waemahadi Waeda-oh, and Halimah Utarasint. Secondly, the constitutional design of the Senate that wished for a neutral Upper House to check and balance the government and bureacracy might not yet be accomplished (Chambers 2009: 20). The ineffectivesness of Senators in the eyes of most voters together with the less democratic elections seemingly decreased the desire of voters, particularly those living in high conflict areas, to participate in senate elections.

Local election in the Deep South

Voters' political participation through elections is not limited to only the national level, political participation in local elections is also important to voters in the conflict areas of southern Thailand. The desire of decentralization was a long-time wish of many Malay-Muslims, as seen in Haji Sulong's seven-point demand. However, due to the fears of the Thai

91 Tuan Abdullah Dauddmareyo is a relative of Wan Muhamad Noor Matha. See *Manager* 20 April 2006, < http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9490000052176>, accessed 13 September 2016.

state, the request for decentralization was always rejected. The concept of decentralization was strengthened after the implementation of the 1997 Constitution. As a result, the Thai political system underwent revolutionary changes to enhance decentralization and empower local government through the 1997 Constitution's inclusive provisions (Albritton 2005, Charas and Weist 2010). The key features regarding decentralization and bottom-up local administration included, for example, the principle of self-government according to the will of the locality, the delineation of power and duties between the central authorities and local administrative organizations, and the right of the locality to elect a local assembly and a local administrative committee or local administrators (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997: Chapter 9).

Currently, the structure of Local Government Organizations (LAOs) in Thailand is divided into four types: Sub-District (*Tambon*) Administrative Organization (TAO), Municipality (*Tessaban*), Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), and two special administrative region organizations, the Bangkok Metropolitan Region and Pattaya City. The municipality is further separated into three types: Sub-district (*Tambon*) Municipality, Town (*Mueang*) Municipality, and City (*Nakorn*) Municipality, depending on population and local income. For the Deep South, there are 267 LAOs in total, divided as illustrated in Table 4-9.

Table 4-9: Numbers of Local Administrative Organizations in three southernmost provinces of Thailand (as of 9 March 2015)

Province	TAO	Municipality			PAO	Total
		Sub-district Municipality	Town Municipality	City Municipality		
Yala	47	13	2	1	1	64
Pattani	96	15	2	-	1	114

Narathiwat	72	13	3	-	1	89

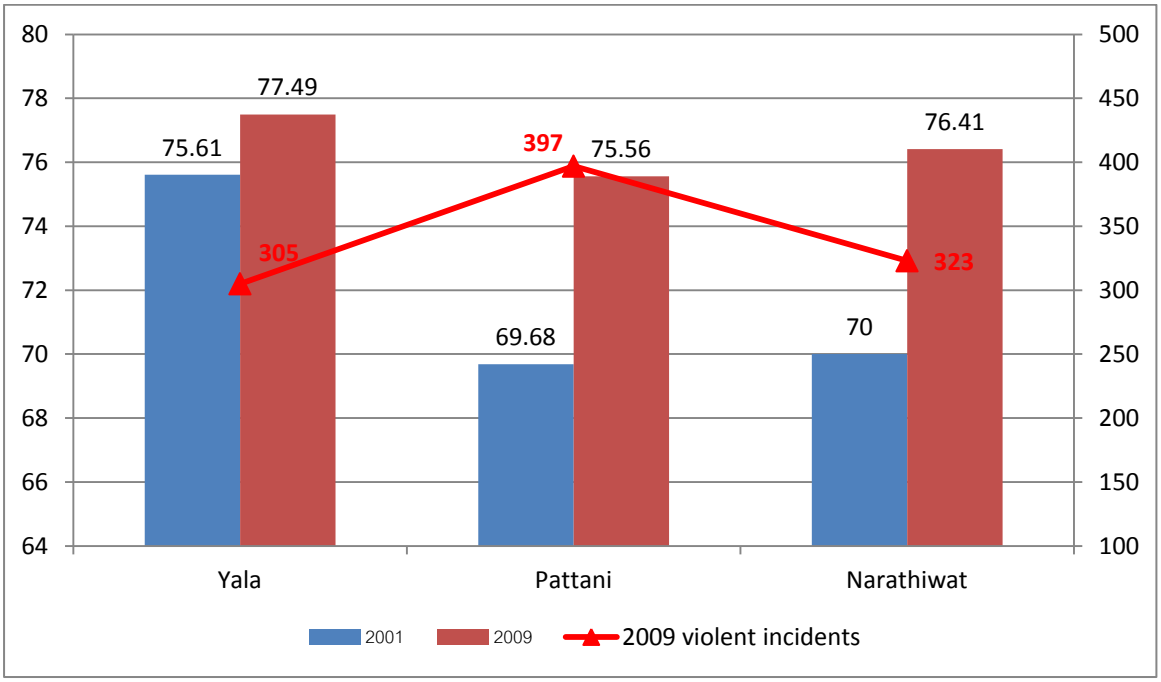
Source: Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior, Thailand

The Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO) is the smallest local government at the community level. According to interviews with local authorities in the Deep South, the lower the level of local elections, the more voters tended to participate[92]. As shown in Figure 4-8, voter turnout was high and increased, especially after the upsurge of conflict and violence, with more than 75% of voters participating in voting in 2009. Interestingly, when comparing voter turnout in 2009 with the violent incidents in the same year, Figure 8 showed an inverse relationship between participation in local election and the violence. Voter turnout of the TAO election in 2009 was lowest in Pattani (75.59%), which had the most frequent violent incidents (397 violent incidents) among the three provinces. The inverse relationship could possibly be because the level of violence was not a major influence on voter's motivation in TAO elections. People expected their MPs to work in the Thai parliamentary system to deliver the policies that could solve the ongoing conflict and violence. For the TAO councils, most voters expected an individual benefit from a personal connection between them and their local representatives. Despite the campaign from state agencies in promoting voters to vote for a good person (khon dee), not for an acquaintance (Khon ru jak), or swindler (Khon kong), most local people still voted for a candidate they had close ties with[93].

[92] Interview, local authorities in Songkhla and Pattani, March and April 2013.

[93] Interview, state authorities in Songkhla, February 2013.

Figure 4-8: Comparison between voter turnout of Members of the Tambon Administrative Organization Council's elections in 2001 and 2009 by province and number of violent incidents in 2009



Sources: The 2001 data is adapted from Trakul Meechai 2003, *The final report on Thai local politics and government* (Bangkok: King Prajadhipok).

The 2009 voter turnout is from the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

The number of violent incidents is from Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "*Sixth Year of the Southern Fire: Dynamics of Insurgency and Formation of the New Imagined Violence*", Deep South Watch, March 10, 2010, p.8. <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/730>, accessed 30 September 2015.

The issue of ongoing conflict and violence was not a major election campaign policy of many TAO candidates. They offered more concrete policies to meet the needs of their voters, such as construction of basic infrastructure, local development projects, promotion of the agricultural occupation, and pensions for the elderly. Voters, especially those in rural areas, are more likely to value doable policies that can benefit them directly[94]. The TAO representatives were able to deliver policy quicker because the process of policy formation in local governments was shorter and involved a smaller group of people. If compared with the

[94] Interview, local authorities in Songkhla and Pattani, March and April 2013.

policies proposed by the elected MPs of the national level, they had to pass through the long process of the parliamentary system before receiving approval by the cabinet and parliament. If the elected MPs were not with a government party, the chance to get their policies approved would be low. It would be even more difficult for the MPs of small provinces[95], so rural areas often had to wait for an extended period until the policies could be implemented. One participant, ironically, said that "Thanks to the conflict and violence, it helped boost the government budget and development of our community[96]." Moreover, since representatives at the TAO level were people living in the village who had a motive to develop their own community, policy implementation was directly for the benefit of the villagers and the community's interests[97].

Besides, the patron-client system at the local level was also an important factor in the high voter turnout. Most of the TAO candidates were supported by the solid ties of their kin-based relationship in their own neighborhood. In some Malay-Muslim villages, almost every household was related by kinship and the election competitors sometimes were relatives or friends. As one villager in Pattani said,

> The TAO election is a competition among relatives. They (candidates) may give us some money to vote for them, but with or without it we will vote for them anyway (because they are our relatives)[98].

[95] Interview, a former MP of Pattani, April 2013

[96] Interview, a villager from Pattani, February 2013.

[97] Interview, a villager from Yala, February 2013.

[98] Interview, a villager from Pattani, February 2013.

The patron-client relationship is so powerful that it greatly affected voting decisions of voters in the conflict areas. For local elections, many voters in the Deep South, similar to people in other regions of Thailand, did not vote for a candidate's performance or policies, they went to the poll and tended to vote for the candidate who they knew, with an expectation for personal benefits in exchange for their votes. The personal benefits were not limited to only money or material goods from vote-buying. For some electorates in the conflict areas, personal benefits also included trust and reliability. Due to the distant relationship between local people and state authorities in the conflict areas, most local people, especially Malay-Muslims, were highly dependant on their local politicians to help them in contacting the state.

Voting for someone they have close ties with ensured them that they would have someone they could trust and run to when they faced a problem. So, voters voted for their relatives because they had no other way. One university student from Pattani pointed out that her father always voted for an influential person, whom he knew, in the district. He also convinced her to vote for the same candidate as him. He said, "we need to vote for him because he is a powerful person. We can trust him that he will help us when we are in need.[99]"

However, the interviews also revealed that voters of different generations participated differently in local elections. For the young generation, they mostly voted for the candidate their parents suggested, with or without knowing that candidate. On the contrary, the older generation took the local election more seriously. Most parents let their children decide by themselves which candidate they wanted to vote for in the national election, but they tended to direct and convince their children to vote for a specific candidate in the local election. One university student whose hometown is in Yala but is studying in Pattani said,

[99] Interview, a university student from Pattani, March 2013.

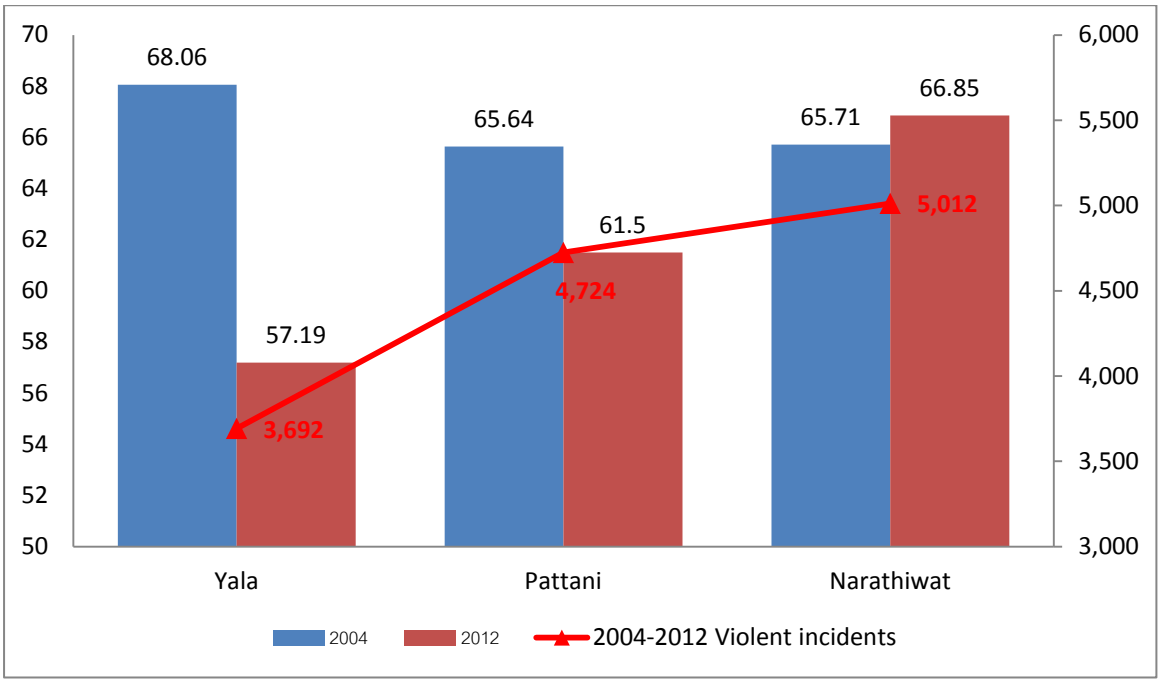
> My father always tells me who I should vote for in local elections, mostly he wanted me to vote for someone he knew or our relatives. But he let me decide by myself for national elections. I am not at home (in Yala) much because I am studying in Pattani. Although I come back home to participate in elections every time, I do not know much about the candidates for local elections. So I always follow my father's advice[100]."

Despite the high voter turnout in the TAOs elections, the local elections for the provincial level have not received as much attention as local elections of the TAOs. After the third modification of the Provincial Administration Organization Act of 1997 in November 2003, the first direct election of the PAO Chief Executives was held for the first time in March 2004 (Achakorn 2007: 455). The first direct election of PAO chief executives could not gain much attention from voters. Voter turnout of the first direct PAOs elections in the three provinces was less than 70%. In the latest PAO election in 2012, voter participation decreased further. As shown in

[100] Interview, a university student from Yala, February 2013.

Figure 4-9, voter turnout in Yala sharply decreased from 68.06 in 2004 to 57.19 in 2012. Similarly, Pattani's voter turnout decreased from 65.64 in 2004 to 61.5 in 2012. However, voter turnout showed the opposite result in Narathiwat where the violent incidents occurred most frequently between 2004 and 2012. Despite the decrease of voter participation in Yala and Pattani, voter turnout in Narathiwat increased from 65.71% in 2004 to 66.85% in 2012.

Figure 4-9: Comparison chart between voter turnout of the PAO Chief Executive elections in 2004 and 2012 and accumulated number of violent incidents between 2004 and 2012



Sources: Voter turnout in 2004 is from Teeraphan Jaiman and Passakorn Inlang 2004, ฐานข้อมูลการเลือกตั้งนายก อบจ, [Database of PAO election in 2004], King Prajadhipok's Institute, p.54.

Voter turnout in 2012 is from the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

Number of violent incidents is from the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center.

Narathiwat, which had the highest voter turnout in 2012, was the only province that had three candidates for the PAO Chief Executive position, while Yala and Pattani had two candidates contesting (See Table 4-10). Local politics in the Deep South has mostly been dominated by the same group of local politicians for long time. For example, Set Aljufree, the PAO Chief Executive of Pattani, has been in his position since 2000, even before Thailand had direct election of the PAO. This may mean that voters are happy with their representatives so they continued to vote for the same candidate every time. However, a decline of voter turnout in Yala and Pattani possibly tells us that some voters gave up their

votes due to hopelessness for change. The domination of local politics by long time political elites in the provinces impeded other candidates from competing. So, some voters did not have many choices and they believed, under a less democratic election, their votes could not bring much change to the community. As a young voter from Yala said, "The local politics in my hometown is pretty much controlled by a certain group of politicians. My vote is useless. They will surely win, whether I vote or not[101]." When Narathiwat had more choices of candidates for their voters, more people participated.

Table 4-10: Candidates for the PAO Chief Executive position in 2012

Province	Name	Votes
Yala	1. Muktar Matha	101,831
	2. Abdulhalim Bahee	45,482
Pattani	1. Set Aljufree	139,482
	2. Mahama Madeng	91,869
Narathiwat	1. Kuseng Yawohasan	143,810
	2. Sumit Masalaeh	110,331
	3. Areepen Utarasint	43,193

Source: *Isranews*, 9 November 2012.

The result of the PAO election in 2012 indicates that voters in the three southern border provinces had different criteria in voting between national and local elections. In the 2011 general election, most voters voted for the Democrat candidates. However, none of Democrat-supported candidates, including Abdulhalim Bahee, Mahama Madeng, and Sumit Masalaeh, won the PAO Chief Executive election.

[101] Interview, a voter from Yala, February 2013.

Whereas the conflict and violent attacks since 2004 seems to have inspired some people to go to the poll, the same factor also discouraged intentions to vote for some candidates. Since some people had less trust in each other and in their political candidates, they then had to find some other incentive to go to vote. Money could be another inspiration that motivated voters to risk their lives and go to the ballot. Some even said they would not go to vote if they did not receive a reasonable amount of money[102]. Due to lifestyles of voters in the Lower South, vote buying mostly happened at tea shops after the Malay-Muslims returned from praying at mosques. Since Muslim women were mostly at home and did not usually participate in political discussions at the tea shop, vote buyers were generally Muslim men. However, although Muslim women did not directly receive money themselves, they were easily induced by their husbands or their fathers to vote for the same candidate[103].

People in the Deep South not only faced violence from the militants, they also experienced intense local power struggles where some competitors even took other's lives to win the election. According to a report by Nattakorn Vititanon (2010), Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala were the first, second, and fourth provinces, respectively, that had the highest number of assassinations of local politicians between 2000 and 2009[104]. There were 34, 31, and 24 local politicians in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, repectively, who were murdered during the period of the study (Nattakorn 2010: 9). Although the study could not decisively determine the real cause of the murders, and some may be related to the insurgency, being in the top five of the list could more or less explain how intense political rivalry was in local elections in the three Malay-Muslim provinces.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Interview, a university student in Pattani, 23 July 2013.

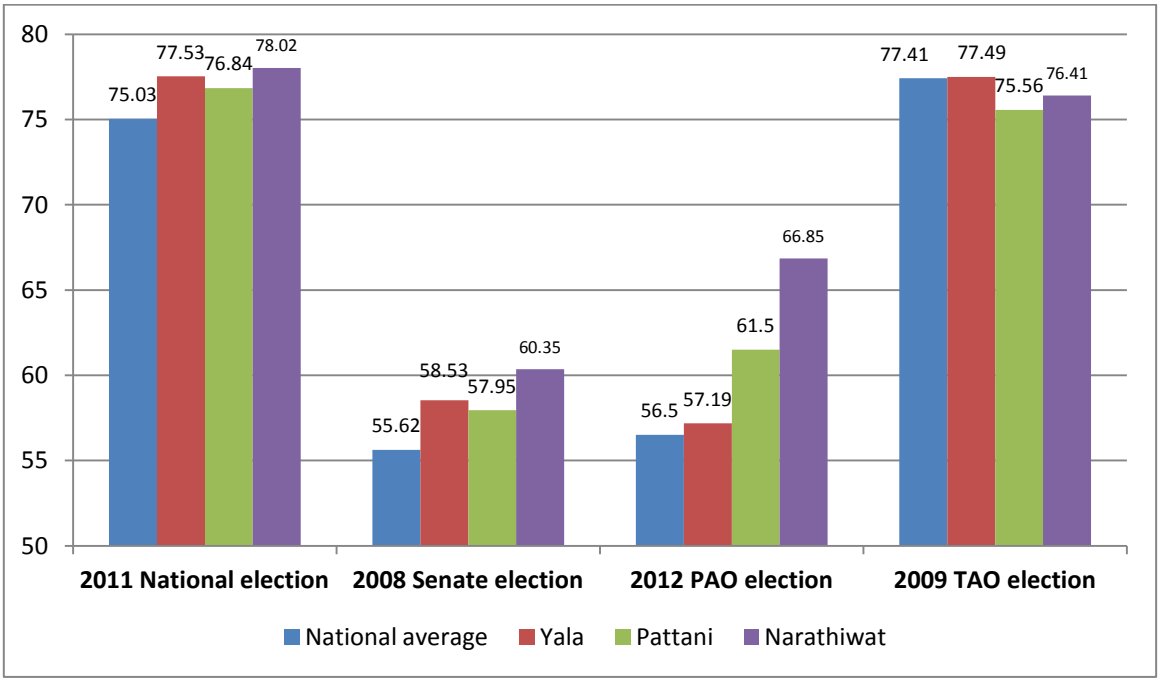
[104] In third was Pattalung, where 30 local politicians were killed during 2000 – 2009.

Both at national and local level, the ongoing conflict and violence had a significant impact on political participation through voting. For many Malay-Muslim voters, the conflict and violence triggered their desire to participate in elections. Many voters in the conflict areas decided to participate in voting as a method to show their disagreement with the government and make their voices heard by Thai politicians. The power of votes was such that major political parties took more consideration of them, which resulted in a change of public policies.

There was speculation that underground groups tried to undermine the elections. Besides destroying elections by causing violence, the insurgents could agitate for disunity, chaos, and confusion against the Thai state. The insurgents, who also were registered voters and participated in elections, went to the poll but their motivation to vote could be complex. Some of the new generation of insurgents graduated in political science from a university in Indonesia, and wanted to create linkages and expand their network through elections. There were beliefs that some insurgents went to vote but intended to void the voting cards; some of them tried to threaten other voters not to vote by defaming the candidates; and some of them were sent to apply as a candidate in elections (Paskorn 2007: 10-11). However, there is no proof of these suspicions. Najmuddin Umar argued that it seemed less likely that the underground group would participate in elections or send its members to take part in Thai politics because the underground group did not believe in the Thai parliamentary system (Paskorn 2007: 13). Political participation through elections by the insurgents, if true illustrated that they did not ignore the importance of the Thai political system. Even though their goal of participation might seem to be dangerous for the Thai government, having them participate and express their views openly through elections would be a lot better than using violent attacks as a way to communicate to the Thai state.

The way people in the conflict areas chose to vote suggests they were saying indirectly that they did not agree with the violence and insurgency. At the same time, when the governments applied violent strategies or unjust practices that could lead to more conflict and violence, many Malay-Muslim voters used their votes as an influential instrument to oppose government policies and tell the government what they really wanted. As a result, as shown in Figure 4-10, people in the Deep South voted at higher rate than people in other regions in most elections, although the level of political participation was diverse in different elections. Voters in the conflict areas tended to participate highest where elections were considered most democratic and effective. As shown in Figure 4-10, more voters in the Deep South participated in the general and TAO elections than in the Senate and PAO elections.

Figure 4-10: Voter turnout of national, Senate, and local elections in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat



Source: The Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Generally, voting behavior is complicated since people have complex motivations in voting. Voters in conflict areas of the Deep South have many inspirations, especially after the return of conflict and violence in 2004. The frequent violent incidents became an additional concern that affected their desire for political participation. People living in the midst of violence seem to be very careful and chose to participate politically only when they think it is important and can create an impact on their society. So, the less democratic elections resulted in lower voter turnout.

Living in the midst of conflict and violence and experiencing many losses and deaths could be a prime mover that motivated some Malay-Muslims to find a way to stop all the conflict non-violently. The Malay-Muslim voters expressed their political views through elections and high rate of voter turnout, indicating that many Malay-Muslim voters desired to solve the conflict and violence in a non-violent form. Many Malay-Muslims decided to participate in Thai politics not only as voters. Many, including the former elites of Patani, religious leaders, and new entrepreneurs, took part in the Thai political system as politicians, who wanted to represent Malay-Muslims in the Thai parliament. However, their intentions to participate as politicians were not as straightforward as expected due to the impact of conflict and violence and the nepotism in Thai politics. The next section considers politicians' political participation in the Deep South to investigate how politicians in the conflict areas participate in Thai politics.

Politicians' political participation in the Deep South

After being annexed and becoming part of Thailand, there were many troubles between the Thai state and the Malay-Muslims, especially the former leaders of the Patani kingdom who lost their power and prestige. When political expression, especially on sensitive issues that threatened Thai security, was strictly prohibited, the dissatisfaction of the Patani elites was expressed violently through unrest and insurgency. Some of them gathered and organized underground groups to call for the independence of Patani, as discussed earlier in Chapter 1. When the political system of Thailand was changed to democracy and the first election was held, some Patani elites, such as Tengku Abdul Jalal, willingly participated within the Thai political system. They considered the elections as a chance to communicate to the Thai state and make demands for their fellow Malay-Muslims. A now-legendary figure in the Malay-Muslim society, Haji Sulong, sowed the seeds of the future participation for the younger generation through public hearings and consultations. Even though his seeds proved short-lived, the political participation of Sulong became a model for the new generation. There were many Malay-Muslims who followed Sulong's trail of participation within the Thai political system; one of his followers was his son, Den Tohmeena, who later gathered with other politicians, both Malay-Muslims and Thai-Buddhists, in the three southern border provinces and formed a political group called Wadah.

Political participation of the Wadah group

The emergence and struggle of the Wadah group in Thai politics before the upsurge of conflict and violence in 2004 was exceptional, as the Wadah group made great progress in the Thai political system, as discussed earlier. The former period before 2004 would be considered the most successful for the Wadah group as it had won every election since its establishment in the later 1980s. Not only were its members, such as Den Tohmeena, Wan Muhamad Nor Matha and Areepen Utarasint, able to take high positions in the Thai cabinet, but the Wadah MPs were also successful in implementing many policies for Malay-Muslims. The past achievements of the Wadah MPs included, for example, permission to wear Hijab in government schools and the establishment of an Islamic bank, both when the group was affiliated with the New Aspiration Party (NAP).

However, its fortune was reversed after 2004. If we looked back to the success of Wadah in gaining seats in the parliament in every election since the 1986 national election, the success made the group popular not only to its Malay-Muslim voters but also attractive to a major national political party, Thai Rak Thai (TRT). After the triumph of Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai party in 2001, the TRT absorbed the Seritham Party and the NAP to establish a majority in the parliament. Duncan McCargo (2006: 53) believed one of the unspoken reasons of Thaksin for incorporating the NAP into the Thai Rak Thai party, rather than to increase his absolute majority in the parliament, was to gain more votes in the South through the popularity of the Wadah group and to develop the southern border provinces under his patronage. However, the decision for merger could not accomplish the goals of Thaksin and the Wadah group. This section will look at political participation of the Wadah in the Thai political system and find out why, despite its high reputation before the

upsurge of violence, after the conflict and violence re-emerged in 2004 the popularity of the Wadah group declined.

During the Thaksin government, Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, one of the Wadah leaders and a NAP party list MP from Yala, was appointed Minister of Transport in 2001 and Minister of Interior in 2002. Although having a Malay-Muslim representative in a highly influential position in Thai politics could be considered as the Wadah group's achievement of a major goal, Wan Noor's performance as interior minister proved unsuccessful. The turning point came when Wan Noor as Interior Minister was put in charge of Thaksin's policy of a War on Drugs in 2003, one of the most contentious policies of Thaksin. The implementation of this policy was harsh and aggressive and led to the extrajudicial killings of 2,275 people during the first three-month phase of the campaign including many in the Far South (Human Rights Watch 2004: 1). Later, there was unrest in the South in 2004 and it was the duty of Wan Noor to handle the violence. However, his performance was not impressive in the eyes of many Malay-Muslims. As a result of the vigilantism (*kha tat ton*) that the Thai authorities used to cope with both the War on Drugs and the unrest in the South, many Malay-Muslims were arrested and killed. Wan Noor subsequently lost trust from his Malay-Muslim voters.

In the view of some Malay-Muslims, Wan Noor was changing sides and representing the Thai state rather than fellow Muslims. Some Malay-Muslims then lost trust and believed Wan Noor fell short in his ability to deal with the violence in the South (McCargo 2006: 53). On the other hand, the Thai state became convinced the Wadah was behind the political violence in the Deep South. The Wadah politicians, especially those who worked in high-ranking positions in the government, found themselves in an awkward predicament. As the Minister of Interior, Wan Noor had the duty to suppress the riots and unrest caused by Malay-Muslim militants, whereas he was also a Malay-Muslim. So, it was difficult for him to

perform his duty[105]. A few months after the firearms robbery in January 2004, Thaksin removed Wan Noor from the Interior ministry. Even though Thaksin never said in public his reason for the dismissal, it was believed that Wan Noor was discharged because Thaksin was displeased with his performance in dealing with the continual security problems in the South (*BBC News*, 10 March 2004 and *Naewna,* 9 March 2004). Another possibility was that Thaksin and the Thai state were too aggressive and incautious. They misidentified Malay-Muslim politicians as the culprits. Thaksin and Thai state authorities brought those suspected culprits too quickly without being sure if they whether true culprits or not. When Wan Noor rightly advised caution and wanted to wait and be certain, the government chose a decisive and aggressive approach and Wan Noor was criticized and opposed.

Den Tohmeena faced the same fate. He started his political career by running for MP of Bangkok in 1957 under the Prachasantibhum group, a group of Muslims in Bangkok, while he was studying Law at Thammasat Univeristy. However, he lost his first battle to Khuang Aphaiwong. Eleven years later, he returned to political battle in local elections. He won and became a member of the Pattani Municipal Council and a member of the provincial council of Pattani (Bukhoree 2006: 27). As a local politician, he gradually strengthened and expanded his political network and vote base in Pattani, which helped him to win national election as Pattani MP in 1976. He was successful as a Malay-Muslim politician, marking the first time in Thai history that a person whose father was accused of being a terrorist became a cabinet minister of Thailand[106].

However, the degrees from Thai universities and his participation in Thai politics as a politician could not protect him from the suspicion and accusations of Thai governments that he was taking the side of Malay-Muslim militants, instead of the side of the Thai state. The

[105] Interview, a Muslim scholar, 21 April 2013.

[106] Ibid.

suspicions of the Thai authorities also affected Den's vote base. He did not receive much support from local authorities, such as Kamnan and Phuyaiban, due to the mistrust that Thai authorities had toward Den's family since the struggle of Haji Sulong, Den's father (Bukhoree 2006: 29). Even though Den clearly expressed that he and the Wadah only wanted to fight through the parliamentary system for Malay-Muslims, it could not stop Thai authorities and the military from keeping close watch on him and the Wadah politicians. The high suspicions of the Wadah members being separatists led to the attempts of Thai authorities to undermine them[107].

Therefore, despite having leading roles in the parliament and cabinet, the Wadah group struggled to survive in Thai politics after the renewed violence in 2004. The Wadah members were facing suspicions of their loyalty from both local Malay-Muslims and the Thai state. Since the Wadah politicians were affiliated with the government party and worked with the Thai state, many local Malay-Muslims doubted their loyalty and it seemed to be quite difficult to rebuild trust. As a result, voters punished them through the 2005 general election and the Wadah candidates under the Thai Rak Thai party could not gain a single seat in the parliament. Similarly, Den Tohmeena returned to the MP competition again after his term of senator ended in 2006. However, despite being a famous figure in Pattani politics for a long time, Den could not take back his seat in this election.

The defeat of Den and the Wadah group clearly emphasized the decreasing popularity of the group among the Malay-Muslims in the Lower South. Despite all the hardship the Wadah members were facing, the leader of the Wadah group, Den Tohmeena insisted on participating legally within the parliamentary system. He pointed out,

[107] For example, Najmuddeen Uma, the Wadah MP from Narathiwat in the 1992 and 2001 elections, was charged with treason in 2004, since the Thai police believed he took part in the January 4th attacks in 2004 and was one of the masterminds of the insurgent group (*Manager*, 3 June 2004). However, after about a one year investigation, all charges were dropped.

> My father was killed. If I took up a gun and joined with you (the separatists), I might shoot a police officer, then I would die. What benefit could come from this? Fighting through politics, through the parliament is better. I totally disagreed (with the underground fighting) but (the Thai state) believed I was a separatist. I was in trouble from both sides and I did not know what to do (*Prachatai*, 21 February 2005).

His statement supports the argument of this study that conflict does not undermine the desire for political participation. However, the conflict could cause changes in voters' attitudes and affect their voting behaviors. So, politicians, who were not able to meet voters' new demands, faced difficulties in retaining their seats.

The election in 2011 was a big change for many Malay-Muslim politicians, especially members of the Wadah group, due to the dissolution of the Palang Prachachon party by the verdict of the Constitutional Court in December 2008. The Wadah members divided into several groups; some members were with the Pheu Thai party, such as Sukarno Matha, Suthiphan Sririkanon, and Burhanuddin Useng; some members, such as Den Tohmeena, Areepen Utarasint, Muk Sulaiman, Nujmuddin Umar, Phaisan Yingsaman, and Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong, moved to a new political party, the Matubhum party. The Matubhum party was led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, the leader of the 2006 military coup and the first Muslim party leader in Thailand, with the aim to establish a Malay-Muslim party and have Malay-Muslim ministers in the Cabinet in order to influence the government on the South policy (*Prachatai*, 15 May 2011). Many former Wadah members who decided to affiliate with the smaller political party believed the party would allow them to have more participation in policy-making which would bring benefits for their voters. Pheu Thai candidate, Sukarno Matha, Wan Noor's brother argued, "The southern border provinces' problem had to be solved by the political party system and the small parties would never be able to achieve it."

(*Deep South Watch*, 14 June 2011). However, none of the Wadah group, either with the Pheu Thai or the Matubhum parties, won a seat in the 2011 election[108].

Political participation of the Wadah group illustrated the influence of conflict and violence towards Malay-Muslim politicians. Living among the conflict and violence where everyone was suspicious of each other provided a gap for the enemy to frame the Wadah group. The violent incidents, especially the Krue Ze and Tak Bai incidents, that occurred while the Wadah MPs were with the government party, were a weak point of the Wadah group, which the opposition used to criticize the Wadah group. Unfortunately, despite participating in Thai politics for more than twenty years, the Wadah group had not made many friends. The Wadah members were always a target of suspicion. The Thai authorities, while they supported the Phiphitphakdi and the Abdunlabut families (Bukhoree 2006: 29), undermined the Tohmeena family and the Wadah group. Den and other members were suspected by the Thai authorities as having entered Thai politics to seek separatism. They were under surveillance during the election campaign. Areepen Utarasint, one of the Wadah leaders, revealed most of the time after he went to the villages to talk and clarify misunderstandings with voters, there would be Thai police or the military coming after and asking villagers what he talked about (*Manager*, 15 February 2005). So, although they were supposed to be Malay-Muslim representatives who could link the Malay-Muslims and the Thai state and speak for the Malay-Muslims, they were not trusted by the Thai state, and the policies proposed by the untrusted Wadah were seldom successful after 2004. When the mandate of voters could not be delivered, the number of the Malay-Muslim voters who voted for the Wadah group decreased.

[108] Anumat Susaror, a winning candidate from the Matubhum party, was not a member of the Wadah group.

The experience of conflict and violence inspired many Malay-Muslims to take part in Thai politics. At the same time, the conflict and violence also complicated politicians' political participation. The conflict and violence not only created more difficulty in election campaigns[109], it also created more suspicion and distrust of each other. Even though the Wadah group was successful in creating unity among Malay-Muslim politicians for a time, the struggle to keep its influence was constant after the re-emergence of conflict and violence in 2004. Joining the TRT might not be the main factor in the Wadah's failure in national elections after 2004 but the conflict and violence, instead, was likely the factor in the loss. The high stakes of violence that led people think it was the time to change.

Political participation of the Darussalam group

In addition to the failure of the Wadah group under Thaksin's parties after the 2005 election, the Darussalam group also changed from the Democrat party to the Thai Rak Thai party and loss subsequent elections. Wairot Phiphitphakdi, an heir of the Sultan of Yaring and one of the Darussalam members, gave the reason for resigning from the Democrat party that even when the Democrat party formed the government, it had never approved his requests on Malay-Muslims matters. He stated,

> I was with the Democrat party for several terms.… (I) told the party to improve the status of the Muslims such as increasing Imams' salary, giving Imams opportunity to go to Mecca. They were poor and had no chance.…I wanted the Party to set up a government budget for them so they would have more willpower in teaching Islam.…I had told the Party to help in this matter for three or four years already but I never received it (Bukhoree 2006: 25).

[109] Due to the conflict and violence, the MP candidates could not organize campaign speeches from late evening until night, which used to be very popular in the three southern border provinces, because voters were too afraid to participate at night time. So, the candidates could only walk to voters' houses and introduce themselves to voters.

Wairot's statement described how he was upset with the Democrat party in not allowing him to deliver the policies that he promised to his voters. So, when the Democrat party did not let him participate in policy-making, he looked for another option, so he could carry out the mandate that he received from his voters.

Interestingly, despite the long history of political struggle between the former Patani traditional elites and the religious leaders since the first direct election in 1937, or to be precise between the Phipitpakdi family and Tohmeena family, the long-time adversaries came to share the same fate with the Thai Rak Thai party in 2004. However, even though the Wadah and Darussalam groups were in the same party, they were not on the same team. Wairot and his group gave conditions to the Thai Rak Thai party before making the decision to move: he and his group would not ever meet with the Wadah group and the TRT had to approve a budget for local development[110]. Moreover, the Thai Rak Thai party promised to take care of all election campaign expenses and guaranteed that they would not lose the election. Wairot gave an interview before the election in 2005 that he was confident that Pattani voters, unlike voters in other southern provinces, did not adhere to a political party, they voted for individual candidates and Pattani voters had believed in him for a long time (*Songkhlatoday*, 4 December 2004). However, the decision of Wairot and the Darussalam group resulted in the loss of their seats to nearly unknown candidates in the 2005 general election.

As shown in Table 4-11, in 2005 Wairot Phiphitphakdi, MP of Pattani since 1995, lost almost half of his votes from the 24,553 votes he received in 2001, to Anwar Salaeh, a young business man and a new candidate of the Democrat party. The defeat of the Darussalam

[110] According to Wairot Phipitpakdi, the Thai Rak Thai party gave him a big budget of more than 300 million baht to develop Pattani**.** The other four members of the Darussalam group who moved to the Thai Rak Thai party also received this budget. When calculated altogether, they received almost 1,000 million baht to develop their provinces. See <http://songkhlatoday.com/paprer/3187>, accessed 21 March 2016.

candidates also is clear in constituency 2 of Pattani where Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong, a Malay-Muslim Police Lieutenant Colonel, lost his seat to the Democrat candidate, Ismael Yidoromae, a former PAO council member of Pattani, a school director of an Islamic boarding school (Ponoh), and husband of Ahmeen Tohmeena's daughter (Bukhoree 2006: 54).

Table 4-11: National election results in Pattani between the 2001 and 2005 elections

	2001			2005					
	Winning Candidates			Winning Candidates			Losing Candidates		
Consti-tuency	Name	Political Party	Votes	Name	Political Party	Votes	Name	Political Party	Votes
1	WairotPhiphitphakdi	Democrat	24,553	Anwar Salaeh	Democrat	28,554	WairotPhiphitphakdi	TRT	15,663
2	Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong	Democrat	26,041	Ismael Yidoromae	Democrat	41,968	Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong	TRT	8,532
3	Sommart Jehna	Democrat	24,902	Mohamadyasi Yusong	Democrat	33,385	Sommart Jehna	TRT	20,763
4	Muk Sulaiman	NAP	29,317	Zata Arwaekuechi	Democrat	28,769	Muk Sulaiman	TRT	13,921

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Remark: NAP = The New Aspiration Party
TRT = The Thai Rak Thai Party

Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong was from Yarang District of Pattani. He became a police officer under a quota of the Ministry of Interior for Malay-Muslim students from southern border provinces. Having police background helped him to receive support from the Thai authorities, especially from government officials, unlike Den who received little support from Kamnan and Phuyaiban. Some local government officials gave support to Jeh Isma-ae in order to balance power and impede candidates who had religious background from winning and

seeking to shape politics in the Deep South[111] (Bukhoree 2006: 50). However, despite receiving winning scores of 26,041 votes in 2001 when Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong was with the Democrat party, his votes went down to only 8,532 in the 2005 general election when he moved to the Thai Rak Thai party.

Whereas all the former Democrat Malay-Muslim MPs in the three southern provinces from the Darussalam group, including Wairot Phipitpakdi, Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong, Sommart Jehna, and Pornpich Pattanakullert, resigned from the Democrat party in 2004, there was only one Buddhist member of the group who decided to stay with the Democrat party, Prasert Phongsuwansiri, a businessman from Yala and the only Buddhist MP of the three southernmost provinces since 1995. He was the only candidate in the three southern provinces who was re-elected in the 2005 general election, while the other MPs were new faces from the Democrat party.

While almost all of the MPs in the three southern border provinces were male, there has been only one female Malay-Muslim politician, Pornpich Pattanakullert, who has won MP elections in Narathiwat since the 1990s. Her political participation as the first and only Malay-Muslim female representative is worth mentioning here. Pornpich was a Malay-Muslim female from Bacho District of Narathiwat, an area that had a high-frequency of violent incidents. She was one of the few Malay-Muslim females who had a higher education from a Thai university. After graduating from the Medicine program at Chulalongkorn University, she became a medical doctor in her hometown in Narathiwat and opened a free clinic for the elderly and disabled. Being a politician was not her dream career but the obstacles that she experienced from working in public health led her to decide that by participating in politics as a politician she could help alleviate the problem of public health

[111] Even though Jeh Isma-ae Jehmong's father was Toh Imam in Yarang district, he was just an ordinary Toh Imam who did not have as much power and influence in the village. Read Bukhoree 2006: 50.

care in Narathiwat (Tichila 2009: 135). So, she decided to participate in local elections and was elected a member of the Municipal Council of Narathiwat in 1990. Later, Pornpich was invited to join the Democrat Party in the national election in March 1992.

As a Malay-Muslim female, her decision to participate and contest a seat was unusual in Malay-Muslim society. Her first participation as the Democrat candidate for the Narathiwat MP position was difficult. Her competitors convinced Malay-Muslim voters that voting for a female candidate was a sin (*Matichon*, 17 August 2004). So, she lost her first national election. She participated again as a Democrat candidate in the following election in September 1992 and she won this time.

Even though she had been with the Democrat party since her first election in 1992 and had won election three times, she was disappointed that her political party ignored her and the other Malay-Muslim MPs of the three provinces in the policy-formation process. The disappointment led to her decision to resign from the Democrat party and move to the Thai Rak Thai party with the belief that the Thai Rak Thai party would help her successfully deliver policies for her voters[112]. Unfortunately, after she resigned from the Democrat Party in 2004, she never won an election again. In the 2007 general election, whereas other members of the Darussalam group were affiliated with the Palang Prachachon party, Pornpich decided to run for the MP position under the newly-founded Matchimathipatai party. Like other faction members, she lost. Pornpich was defeated by a new player in MP elections, Waemahadi Waeda-oh (Mor Wae or Doctor Wae) from the Pheu Pandin party.

When compared to the Wadah group, political participation of the Darussalam group seemed to be less complicated. While the Wadah group had a two-sided battle from both the Thai authorities, who always looked at the Wadah members as suspected separatists and tried

[112] Pornpich and the Darussalam group were also upset that the Democrat party made light of her group and did not promote her, as representatives of the Darussalam group, to be party executives (*Matichon,* 17 August 2004).

to undermine them, and many Malay-Muslim voters, who doubted the sincerity of the Wadah group towards the Malay-Muslims. The Darussalam group was considered in a better position in terms of support from Thai government officials. The Darussalam group seemed not to have issues with government mistrust and none of the Darussalam members was accused of being involved in the unrest or with separatism. However, the support from the Thai authorities could not help the group members to win an election after the conflict and violence re-emerged.

The dissatisfaction of many Malay-Muslim voters with Thaksin's policies in lessening the unrest that re-emerged in the Deep South in January 2004 impacted hugely in the decline of the popularity of the Wadah and Darussalam members under the Thai Rak Thai party in the 2005 general election. Moreover, Thaksin was blamed for being neglectful of his election campaign in the conflict areas of the Far South. He campaigned across the country but not in the Far South, where there was no Thaksin voter base. So, despite the popularity of the TRT candidates in other regions, the loss of all the MP seats in the Far South in the 2005 general election was partly the result of Thaksin's negligence towards Malay-Muslim voters in the region.

After the re-emergence of violence in 2004, voters' fondness for charismatic candidates or the descendants of Patani traditional elites became less important than their policy preferences. According to the interviews and the result of national elections since 2004, most voters tended to vote for the candidate they believed could potentially deliver effective policies to lessen the conflict and violence. Unlike people in other regions, the experiences of conflict and violence of both voters and politicians in the Deep South became an additional influence on their desire for political participation though elections. Most voters in the conflict areas expected more from their votes and elected MPs. So, politicians or political parties that could not response to voters' needs regarding the ongoing violence, no

matter how long they were elected or how beloved, lost support. The boycott of the long-time elected politicians opened an opportunity for new players to get into political competition.

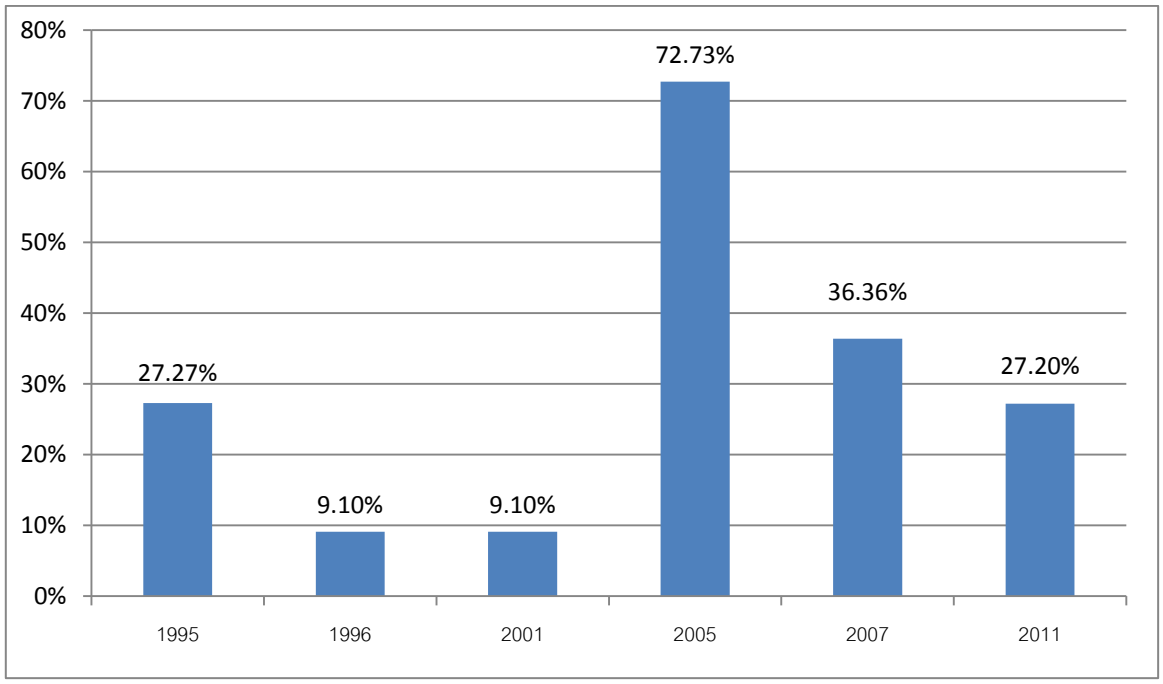
New players in national politics

The inattention of Thaksin towards the southernmost provinces did not end at the election but it negatively affected policy formation and caused difficulty in the work of the MPs of the Far South. Although the MPs gave their promises to their voters to implement their proposed policies, the policies could not be delivered as they were being blocked by the majority rule of the parliament, especially the policies proposed by the MPs of opposition parties[113]. The conflict and violence caused higher stakes in voting as violence needed to be solved. So, when the mandate from voters could not be carried out, it resulted in a huge decline of votes. However, the decreasing popularity of the former MPs opened opportunity for new politicians to enter into politics in the conflict areas.

As shown in Figure 4-11, the dissatisfaction of voters towards the government's policies and their representatives in solving the conflict and violence gave way to new players to enter the Thai parliament. There were 8 from the total 11 candidates (72.73%) who were elected for the first time in the 2005 general election. Only 3 candidates in the 2005 general election were re-elected from the previous election in 2001.

[113] Interview, a former MP of Songkhla, 12 March 2013.

Figure 4-11: Percentage of new elected candidates in general elections between 1995 and 2011



Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Living in the midst of conflict areas increased risks for voters in participating in every political activity. For some voters in the Deep South, political participation through national elections meant to them more than strengthening a patron-client relationship, individual interests, or civic duty. They voted because they wanted to see the mitigation of conflict and violence. When voters intend their representative to take part in the policy formation process, they have high expectationa. Due to the high stakes in voting, if that representative failed to deliver the policies as promised, voters in conflict areas had no hesitation to give that chance to a new candidate. Some said that "Voting is my only tool to pay back the politicians. The new candidate I voted for might not have anything better than the old ones, but I just wanted them (the former MPs) to know that we are disappointed with their performances[114]." They

[114] Interview, a voter in Pattani, February 2013.

thus gave that chance to new candidates to represent the interests of voters in the conflict areas and deliver the policies they wanted more effectively.

The conflict and violence resulted in changes in voting behavior and opened opportunities for new candidates from different backgrounds. In the past, especially during the first few elections after the transition of the Thai government system, electoral participation in the Deep South was mostly dominated by small groups of traditional elites, both royal families and religious leaders, as discussed in Chapter 3. As time passed, people in the Deep South gradually learned about Thailand's new political system and became more politically active. Not only was there an increase in voters' participation, but wider groups of Malay-Muslims also participated as political candidates. The later period after the formation of the Wadah group (1986-2001) showed more varied backgrounds of elected politicians. As shown in Table 4-12, there were groups of, for example, local politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, farmers, employees, and other professional careers, who ran in general elections and who elected between 1986 and 2011.

Table 4-12: Elected candidates in the three southern provinces by occupation

Occupation	Before 2004 (1986-2001) Percentage (number)	After 2004 (2005 – 2011) Percentage (number)
Local politicians	34.62% (9)	22.73% (5)
Bureaucrats	15.38% (4)	13.63% (3)
Teachers	11.53% (3)	0
Businessmen	7.69% (2)	31.82% (7)
Doctors	3.85% (1)	4.54% (1)
Policemen	3.85% (1)	0
Farmers	3.85% (1)	0
Private employees	3.85% (1)	0
Lawyers	3.85% (1)	18.18% (4)
Islamic Private School Directors	0	9.1% (2)
Information not available	11.53% (3)	0
Total	***100% (26)***	***100% (22)***

Remark: 1. There are 5 candidates who were elected both before and after the re-emergence of violence. They are included in both periods of the analysis.

2. The data includes the two candidates who won later in by-elections.

Sources: The Secretariat of the House of Representatives; Bukhoree Yeema 2012, นักการเมืองถิ่นจังหวัดยะลา [Politicians of Yala Province], King Prajadhipok's Institute; Bukhoree Yeema 2006, นักการเมืองถิ่นจังหวัดปัตตานี [Politicians of Pattani Province], King Prajadhipok's Institute; Rujaluckraya Kananurak 2015, นักการเมืองถิ่นจังหวัดนราธิวาส [Politicians of Narathiwat Province], King Prajadhipok's Institute.

Table 4-12 also illustrated some changes in elected candidates' backgrounds between the period before and after the recurrence of violence. From the 1986 election, the first election after the formation of the Wadah, to the 2001 general election, national politics in the Deep South was mostly controlled by the high number of formerly local politicians (34.62%) and bureaucrats (15.38%). Some descendants of traditional elites, such as Den Tohmeena and Wairot Phiphitphakdi, were still widely accepted by most voters during this period though. However, the influence of conflict and violence since 2004 motivated a new group of people from various occupations to take part in the elections as political representatives. Also, the analysis on elected candidates's backgrounds could also more or less indicate which side people were on.

After the violence in 2004, whereas the percentage of former local politicians decreased from 34.62% to 22.73%, the candidates with business background increased as they gained the most seats in the Deep South (31.82%), compared to the earlier elections between 1986 and 2001 where only 7.69% were businesspeople. One of the elected candidates who was once an entrepreneur is Anwar Salaeh. Anwar was generally known in Pattani as a young successful businessman. He was invited many times by politicians from various groups and political parties to run in an election, both local and national, since he was 25. He never had an interest in politics until he was in his mid-thirties and was invited to join the Democrat party. The conflict and suspicion between Muslims and Buddhists was also partly his motivation as he wanted to see unity back in his hometown[115]. Voters' disappointment in the former elected candidates and the violent incidents at Krue-Se and Tak Bai caused negative votes against their former favorite candidates[116]. So, this left the door

[115] Interview, Anwar Salaeh, February 2013.

[116] Ibid.

opened for new candidates, such as Anwar, to win a position as some voters looked for a fresh new politician to take the seat.

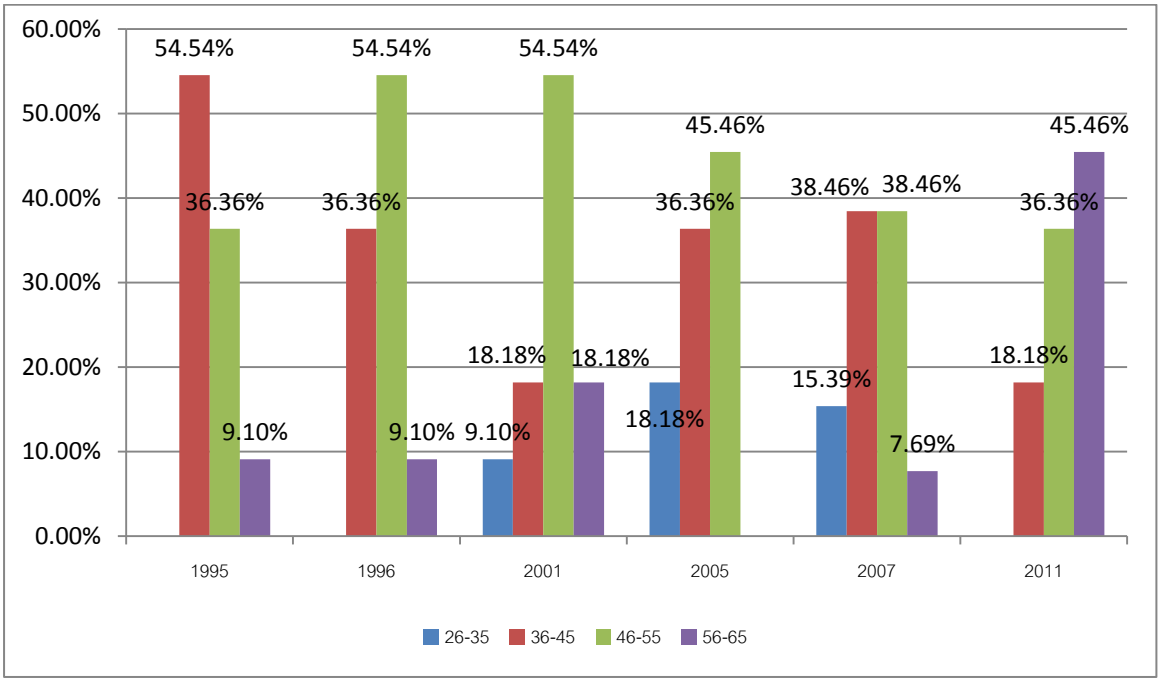
More interestingly, the number of elected candidates who were former lawyers also increased from 3.85% (1 candidate) during the period before the violence to 18.18% (4 candidates) in the elections after the recurrence of violence. The popularity of lawyers could possibly increase due to the problems in the justice system in the Deep South as a result of the conflict and violence that made more people need help from lawyers, especially in security cases. For example, Abdulkarim Dengrakina, the elected candidate of Yala in the 2005, 2007, and 2011 elections, was once a lawyer in Yala. He helped poor people to pursue casea and provided free legal services (Bukhoree 2012: 167). Similarly, Narong Duding, the winning candidate of Yala in the 2005 and 2011 general elections, was also a lawyer. He had worked at the Muslim Lawyer Association, led by Somchai Neelapaijit, since he was newly graduated (Manager, 8 February 2005). Former experiences as lawyers became one of their strengths in winning positions after 2004.

When considering the group ages of elected candidates, Figure 4-12 showed that there were differences between the ages of elected candidates before and after the upsurge of violence in 2004. The young candidates (26-35) did not receive many votes from voters in the Deep South. The only young candidate (9.1%) who won the general election in 2001 when he was in his twenties was Attaphol Mamah, a 26-year-old volunteer teacher from Narathiwat. However, he won the by-election after Suthiphan Sririkanon was removed due to alleged vote-buying. Based on interviews, some participants in the conflict areas pointed out that young people did not gain much recognition from most voters in the Deep South, especially from the elderly. It was also quite general that older people tended not to listen to younger people's opinions. One participant said "When I had a chance to vote, I preferred to vote for

some new blood or someone who offered policies that opened opportunities for the young generation to be able to participate more in politics[117].”

However, Figure 4-12: Percentage of the elected candidates by age groupsdemonstrated some changes in voting behavior of voters in the Deep South after the violence in 2004. More voters tended to vote for younger candidates. There were a higher number of younger candidates (26-35 years old) such as Yusri Susaror (28 years old), Adul Sahibatu (28 years old), and Anwar Salaeh (35 years old). On the contrary, the number of elected candidates who were 46-55 in the 2005 general election decreased from the previous election, and none of the more-than-56-year-old candidates won in 2005.

Figure 4-12: Percentage of the elected candidates by age groups



Remark: 1. The data includes the two candidates who won later in by-elections.

2. The information of Suthiphan Sririkanon, the winning candidate of Narathiwat in 2011, is not included as he was given a red card and removed from the position.

Sources: The Secretariat of the House of Representatives.

[117] Interview, a young voter from Pattani, September 2012.

The data on elected candidates' hometown also showed interesting results. Figure 4-13 showed that more than half of the candidates (12 from the total 22) who won election after 2004 came from the top ten districts that had highest violent incidents during January 2004 – January 2014. Living in the midst of conflict and violence might impede people from participating in elections, but for some people, the conflict and violence could not destroy their intention to take part in Thai politics. The conflict and violence, on the contrary, could increase desire for greater participation since the higher stakes violence needed to be addressed.

Table 4-13: Elected candidates after 2004 by hometown and the cumulative number of violent incidents between January 2004 and January 2014

District	Number of violent incidents (ranking)	Number of elected candidates
Mueang Yala	1,229 (1)	1
Ra-ngae	922 (2)	3
Yarang	891 (3)	1
Raman	845 (5)	2
Sai Buri	762 (7)	2
Mueang Pattani	710 (8)	2
Nong Chik	677 (9)	1
Mueang Narathiwat	476 (13)	3
Tak Bai	419 (15)	1
Si Sakhon	371 (19)	1
Panare	346 (22)	2
Thung Yang Daeng	233 (27)	1
Waeng	168 (28)	1
Betong	144 (29)	1
	Total	**22**

Sources: Number of violent incidents is from the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC)

Information on MPs' hometown is from the Secretariat of the House of Representatives

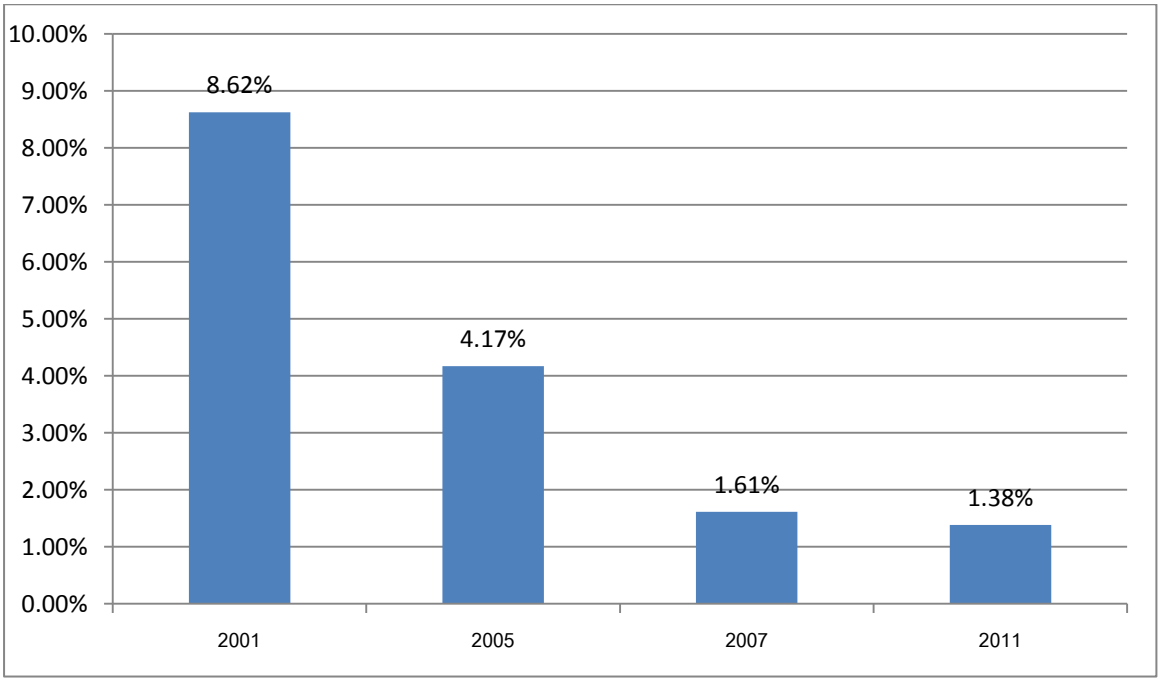
Experiences of conflict and violence do not always come from the insurgents. Living in the midst of conflict and violence could easily cause distrust, suspicion, and difficult relationships between the Thai state and its people, especially the borderland Muslims. There were many times that people in the conflict areas experienced violence by Thai security officers caused by deeply suspicions of the Thai state towards the Malay-speaking Muslim of southern Thailand. However, the negative experiences did not stop the intention to participate in the Thai parliament. One of the elected politicians who was once arrested by the Thai state is Waemahadi Waeda-oh or Mor Wae, a medical doctor, civil society activist, and the candidate of the 2007 national election.

Mor Wae was accused by the Thai police of being a Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) member and planning to bomb five embassies in Bangkok in 2003 (*Manager*, 29 April 2005). He was arrested for treason in June 2003 and claimed that he was tortured into confessing by the Thai police, but he asserted that he was not guilty (*Manager*, 29 April 2005). Finally, after 2 years of investigation, he was released without being charged on 1 June 2005. He then decided to continue working for the good of the Malay-Muslims, but in a different way. He stopped his role as a civil society activist and began his new political career by running for the position of Narathiwat elected senator in 2006. He won with the highest number of votes in Narathiwat and became Senator of Narathiwat in April 2006. However, Thailand's senate was abrogated due to the military coup in September 2006. Mor Wae and a number of former senators who worked together on the South problems in the National Legislative Assemply under the Surayud government then formed the Sajjanuparb group and successfully took four MP seats nationwide (three constituency MPs and one Party-list MP) in the 2007 general election.

Although Mor Wae did not have as strong of a political network as other candidates, the government mistrust seemed to help him to get a lot of votes from his sympathisers and he won with the highest vote total in Narathiwat. He was expected by many Malay-Muslims

voters to bring new hope that could help lessen the ongoing crisis in their province. Although personal political networks and the Party's vote base were generally important and could greatly help new candidates to be elected, the mistreatment of Malay-Muslim minorities by the state created new conditions in voting decisions for some voters in the Deep South. Due to unhappiness with the Thai state, many voters tended to vote for a candidate who had experienced government mistrust. So, new players, such as Waemahadi, earned votes from those who resented the state, or sympathized with those who suffered injustice.

Figure 4-13: Percentage of female candidates in the general elections between 2001 and 2011 in the three southernmost provinces



Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

In terms of gender, most new players in general elections after the recurrence of violence were male candidates. Figure 4-13 demonstrated a significant decline of female participation in the Lower House. In the 2001 general election, there were 5 female candidates or 8.62% who ran for MP positions in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. One of them

was Pornpich Pattanakullert, the only female MP in the history of the Malay-Muslim dominated provinces. Nevertheless, female candidates in the Deep South sharply declined in subsequent elections after the violence. There were only 2 (4.17%), 2 (1.61%), and 1 (1.38%) female candidates, both Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims, who ran for election in 2005, 2007, and 2011, respectively. None of them was elected.

The conflict and violence had a great impact on politicial participation of politicians in the Deep South. It increased pressure on political candidates as people had high expectation for their representatives. The high stakes led people to think it might be time for change. As one voter mentioned, "I have to vote out the former candidate who has never done anything to improve the situation. When we voted for someone and he did nothing for our community, it affected us as well. So, whenever I have a chance to change, I go to vote to make change happen[118]." So, most MPs from the period before the recurrence of violence were not re-elected. No matter who won an election, whether they were from the Democrat or Phue Thai party, neither side could help in lessening the conflict and violence. This may have affected voter turnout. Moreover, while some politicians decided to continue to participate in elections, some candidates, especially female candidates, decided to stop running for office. The violence created high barriers that gave less opportunity for women to win.

[118] Interview, a voter from the conflict area of Songkhla, February 2013.

Political participation of local politicians

Even though Thailand is sometimes considered a centralized society, decentralization is also present. The attempts to promote decentralization and develop a bottom-up rural administration have become more and more important during the past two decades. The concept of decentralization and local government system has gained increasing recognition by the Thai state after the Fifth National Economic and Social Development plan was issued in 1982. Nevertheless, the Fifth Plan was not able to reach its goal of rural decentralization since local administrative power was still largely centralized in Bangkok during that time. The notion of decentralization became a stronger trend after the May 1992 event. The decentralization concept turned out to be one of the major campaign policies of at least five political parties during the general election of September 1992 (Supasawad 2008: 31). After that, the newly elected government under Prime Minister Chuan Leekphai of the Democrat Party announced the Tambon (Subdistrict) Council and Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO) Act in 1994, which became effective in March 1995, with its aim to decentralize decision-making power to local people and enhance popular participation in community development (Orapin 2001: 3). As a result, the first local election of TAO was held on 1st May 1995.

The election changed the methods of selection but it generally did not change the local politicians in rural areas, including the three southern border provinces. Many of the local politicians were still former politicians or those already in a political network. A clear example of a political network of local politicians in the Far South can be investigated from elections of the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). The first direct PAO election was held in March 2004, just two months after the first bloody incident by Malay-Muslim militants throughout Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat that marked a new level of insurgency in

the Deep South of Thailand. National average voter turnout in the 2004 PAO election was around 60% (*Matichon* 15 March 2004), whereas voter turnout in the Deep South was slightly higher than 65% (see

Figure 4-9).

For the Malay-Muslims in the three southern provinces, the PAO election opened new political space for them to participate in Thai local politics. However, most of the candidates in the PAO elections were familiar faces, who were former politicians in their provinces.

Figure 4-14: Number of PAO chief executive candidates in the Deep South by occupation

Sources: Based upon Trakul Meechai 2003, *Kanmueang Kanphokkrong Thongthinthai* [Thai local politics and government] (Bangkok: King Prajadhipok), Teerapan Jaiman and Passakorn Inlang 2004, *Thankhormun kanleuaktung nayok aor bor jor* [database of the PAO chief executive elections], (Bangkok: King Prajadhipok), *Post Today*, 26 February 2004, *Isranews*, 23 April 2008, and *Isranews*, 9 November 2012.

Figure 4-14 showed that almost all candidates for the PAO elections since the first direct PAO election in 2004 were local politicians, including former PAO executives (7, 4, and 4 candidates in 2004, 2008, and 2012, respectively), former TAO executives (1 and 2

candidates in 2008 and 2012, respectively), and former MPs (Ramree Mamah in the 2008 election, and Areepen Utarasint in the 2012 election). There was only one candidate, Dawut Sa, who ran for PAO chief executive in 2004 and 2008, who was an Islamic religious teacher. However, this was not his first election. He ran for the Senate election in 1996 and MP election (Party list candidate) in 1997 (*Manager*, 16 August 2010).

The ongoing conflict and violence possibly impeded new players, who did not have a strong vote base, from running. During the conflict situation, the practices of electioneering were more difficult and dangerous. Moreover, voters tended to vote for candidates they already knew well because the conflict and violence led them not to take more risks and to vote for people they could trust at the local level. Based on the way they voted and my interviews, voters in the conflict areas had different conditions in selecting their local and national representatives. In the midst of conflict and violence, local politicians had closer relationship with villagers than national politicians. So, voters preferred to vote for someone they could trust.

Although most voters in local elections cast votes based mainly on patron-client relations, this does not mean that policies were unimportant. Campaign policies in the local elections focused more on local problems and community development rather than on solving the violent incidents. So, the conflict and violence after 2004 might not change policies of local election candidates. It would not be surprising that voters gave higher importance to a patron-client relationship in local elections because they knew each other well and they chose someone they knew rather than a stranger[119].

Table 4-14: The elected PAO chief executives of the three southern border provinces

[119] Interview, a local politician in Pattani, March 2013.

Province	2004	2008	2012
Yala	Aziz Benhawan	Muktar Matha	Muktar Matha
Pattani	Set Aljufree	Set Aljufree	Set Aljufree
Narathiwat	Kuseng Yawohasan	Kuseng Yawohasan	Kuseng Yawohasan

Source: Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior, Thailand

As shown in Table 4-14, since the first PAO election in 2004, all of the PAO chief executives were re-elected. Even though there was a change of PAO executive in Yala in 2008, both Aziz and Muktar were allies within the same political network of Wan Noor (McCargo 2008: 76). On the one hand, the re-elected politicians could be considered negatively, as they controlled and dominated local politics and elections[120]. On the other hand, politicians, who were re-elected could be seen positively, as most voters were satisfied in their performances and trusted in them. Based on election results of national elections after 2004, when most voters in the conflict areas distrusted their former MPs, they changed their votes. So, if they were dissatisfied with their local politicians, we could likely expect the same.

Table 4-15: Election results of the PAO chief executives election in the three southern border provinces in 2012

[120] Interview, voters in Songkhla and Pattani, February and March 2013.

Province	Candidates	Votes
Yala	Muktar Matha Abdullahim Bahee (Democrat)	101,831 45,482
Pattani	Set Aljufree Mahama Madeng (Democrat)	139,482 91,869
Narathiwat	Kuseng Yawohasan Areepen Utarasint Sumit Masa (Democrat)	143,810 43,193 110,331

Source: *Isranews*, 9 November 2012.

The PAO elections were not only a competition to find representatives of the locality, the PAO elections were also a battle among the national major political parties. Winning local elections could help the political party to expand its vote base and a bigger vote base would benefit the party in national elections and vice versa. For the Far South, after the re-emergence of violence in 2004, the Malay-Muslims used elections as a channel to express their dissatisfaction with the aggressive policies of the Thaksin government towards the violence in the Far South by not voting for Thaksin's political parties, voting out the Wadah group politicians, and voting for the Democrat candidates instead. However, this election behavior seemed not to extend to local elections, including the PAO elections. For example, despite the victory of the Democrat party in the three southern provinces in the MP election in July 2011, all the Democrat-supported candidates for the PAO Chief Executive in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat could not win any seats in the 2012 PAO chief executive election (see Table 4-15). Therefore, although voting behavior of the Malay-Muslims in national elections after the re-emergence of violence in 2004 changed to focus more on policy as stated in the earlier section, this behavioral change seems not to be applied to local elections. Instead of policy, a solid political network was still an important factor to win local elections

The extent of relationships was not limited to between national and provincial level but also existed within the local government system. For some families, local government organizations were like their family business where almost all members of their family worked for many generations. For example, one PAO member in the conflict areas of the Deep South explained his political network;

> My Grandfather was Kamnan and Phuyaiban.
>
> My Father was Kamnan and Phuyaiban too.
>
> My wife has been Phuyaiban for two to three terms already.
>
> My nephew is a TAO member.
>
> I am now a PAO member, winning every election since the first time I ran[121].

Since policy might not be a primary factor to win elections, local politicians tried to expand their vote base as much as possible. Many tactics were used, including vote buying and violence (Pasuk and Baker 2004: 13). The problems of election fraud, including vote buying, were commonly seen throughout the country, including for many Thai Buddhist and Malay-Muslim voters, who live in the midst of conflict and violence in the Deep South[122]. Interestingly, the most expensive vote buying was in the smallest unit of local government. In some villages, while some locals received 200-500 baht per person in vote buying for MP elections, they could receive as much as 3,000 baht per person for the TAO elections. In some cases, they even received about ten thousand within one day from four TAO candidates[123]. The competition for local elections was very tense. There were increasing numbers of shootings and killings among local politicians and their vote-canvassers,

[121]Interview, a PAO member in Songkhla, 17 November 2012.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Interview, a university student in Songkhla, 23 September 2012.

especially before elections. (Askew 2010: 120). However, similar to other criminal acts, the numbers of killings were wrongly added to the numbers of violent attacks by insurgents.

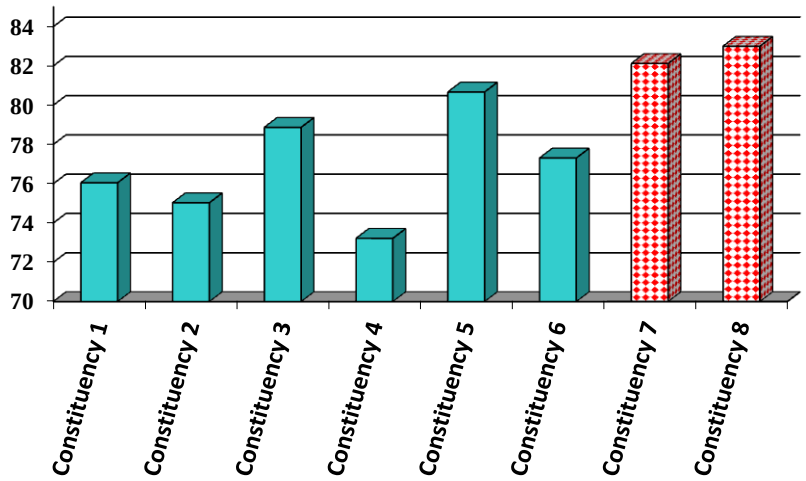
Unlike the national elections, based on my conversations and interviews in the Deep South, I found that local elections were not affected much by the conflict and violence because many voters and candidates did not give much importance to the policies on the problem of violence in local elections. Most voters participated in local elections and voted for their relatives or someone they knew because they did not have other reasons to vote. Whereas local people expected national politicians to solve the security issue, they expected something else from their local representatives. It appears that in local elections they voted for personal linkages rather than national policies and local politicians who had wider and stronger networks were highly likely to win.

Drawing Contrasts: a direct comparison of conflict and non-conflict areas

After the conflict and violence in the Deep South escalated, it affected many people's lives both socially and politically. In term of politics, the experiences of conflict and violence directly affected electoral participation and voting behavior in the conflict areas, as discussed earlier in this Chapter. The evidence is clear when looking at political participation through elections in Songkhla, where the province combined conflict and non-conflict areas. As shown in Figure 4-15, the voter turnout of the 2005 national election in the four conflict-affected districts of Songkhla (Constituency 7 and 8), which are Na Thawi, Saba Yoi, Chana, and Thepha, was higher than in other areas that did not have a record of violence. Constituency 8 of Songkhla including Chana and Thepha districts had the highest voter turnout rates which were 82.42%. On the other hand, the lowest rate of voter turnout,

73.22%, was at Constituency 4, which included Ranot, Krasae Sin, and Sathing Phra districts. The three districts had no record of violence and were reported among the poorest districts of Songkhla (*Komchadluek,* 14 March 2011).

Figure 4-15: Voter turnout of Songkhla in the 2005 national election



Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

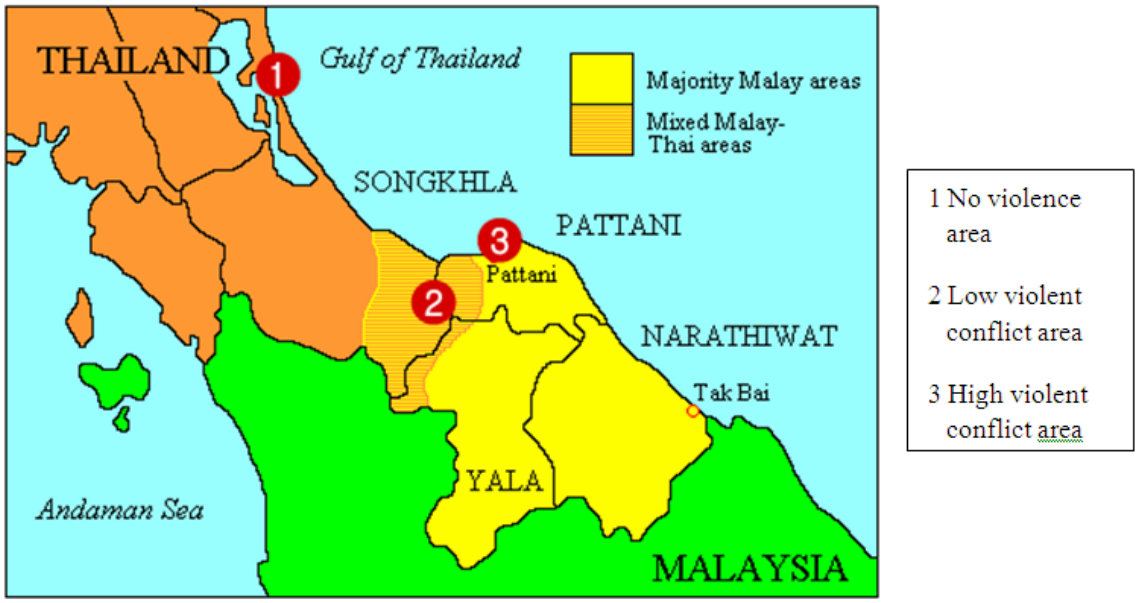
Therefore, based on the overall picture of the 2005 national election in Songkhla, the first election after the re-emergence of violence in 2004, voter turnout provides some support for the contention that the relationship between conflict and violence could be a driving force to popular participation (Blattman 2007 and 2009, Bellows and Miguel 2008, and Shewfelt 2009). On the other hand, the "resource model" or "standard SES model" (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) that argued individuals with high socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in politics than individuals with low levels of socioeconomic status seemed to be accurate when looking at Constituency 4 of Songkhla where the areas were among the poorest districts of the province

and had the lowest voter turnout. However, a deeper study of various elections comparing the different level of conflict areas needs to be examined before arriving at any conclusion. This section intends to draw a contrast among the three violent conflict areas and peaceful areas in order to investigate the ground assumption of this research, whether or not conflict and violence can become a driving force for carefully considered political participation. Based on the 2005 national election of Songkhla, the constituencies that had the highest and the lowest voter turnout, which were constituency 4 and constituency 8 are brought into the study as non and low violence conflict areas. Mueang Pattani represented a high violence conflict area because the district experienced the most frequent violence in Pattani in 2014 and ranked fifth in most frequent violent incidents among the southern border provinces. Therefore, the three different areas brought to the case study are as follows:

1. No violent area: Ranot and Sathing Phra districts of Songkhla[124]
2. Low violence conflict area: Chana and Thepha districts of Songkhla
3. High violence conflict area: Mueang district of Pattani

Figure 4-16 : Map of the study areas[125]

[124] Even though Krasae Sin was included in Constituency 4 of Songkhla in 2005, the district is not taken into consideration because there is no mosque in this district.



As shown in Figure 4-16, Ranot and Sathing Phra districts are located in the northernmost area of Songkhla between the Gulf of Thailand and Songkhla Lake. The areas were once part of Phatthalung and came under the control of Songkhla during the reign of King Rama IV. Ranot was upgraded to be one of Songkhla's districts on 1 April 1924, comprising 12 subdistricts and 73 villages. Sathing Phra was upgraded to a district later on 1 November 1957, comprising 11 subdistricts and 79 villages.

Due to shared history and geography, both Ranot and Sathing Phra have similar social and economic backgrounds. The majority of the population in both Ranot and Sathing Phra are Buddhists (99% in Ranot and 95% in Sathing Phra) and the main income is from rice farming. Even though Ranot and Sathing Phra are not directly connected to the conflict and violence in the southern border provinces, the areas have their own conflict and problems

[125] This map is adapted from *Map showing the ethnic distribution in southern Thailand* [image], <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency#/media/File:Souththailandmap.GIF>, accessed 20 April 2016.

mainly involving water resources that led to a conflict between shrimp and rice farmers in the areas. Moreover, Ranot and Sathing Phra villagers also shared problems with villagers in other districts of Songkhla on artisanal fishery (*Pramong phuen ban*).

Chana and Thepha districts are two of the four violent conflict districts of Songkhla. The majority of the population in Chana and Thepha are Muslims. Chana is named "the city of the two cultures" (*Mueang Song Watthanatham*) in which both Thai Buddhists and Malay-Muslims lived peacefully together for a long time[126]. Similarly, Thepha district is a multiethnic society. The ratio between the Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims are quite close (40: 60)[127].

Table 4-16: Numbers of violent incidents in Chana and Thepha districts from 2004 to 2009

District	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Chana	19	2	9	9	1	-
Thepha	8	7	56	9	8	1

Source: Deep South Incident Database

However, even though conflict and violence did not occur in Chana and Thepha as often as in the three southern provinces, violent incidents have happened from time to time

[126] Interview, a religious teacher in Songkhla, March 2013.

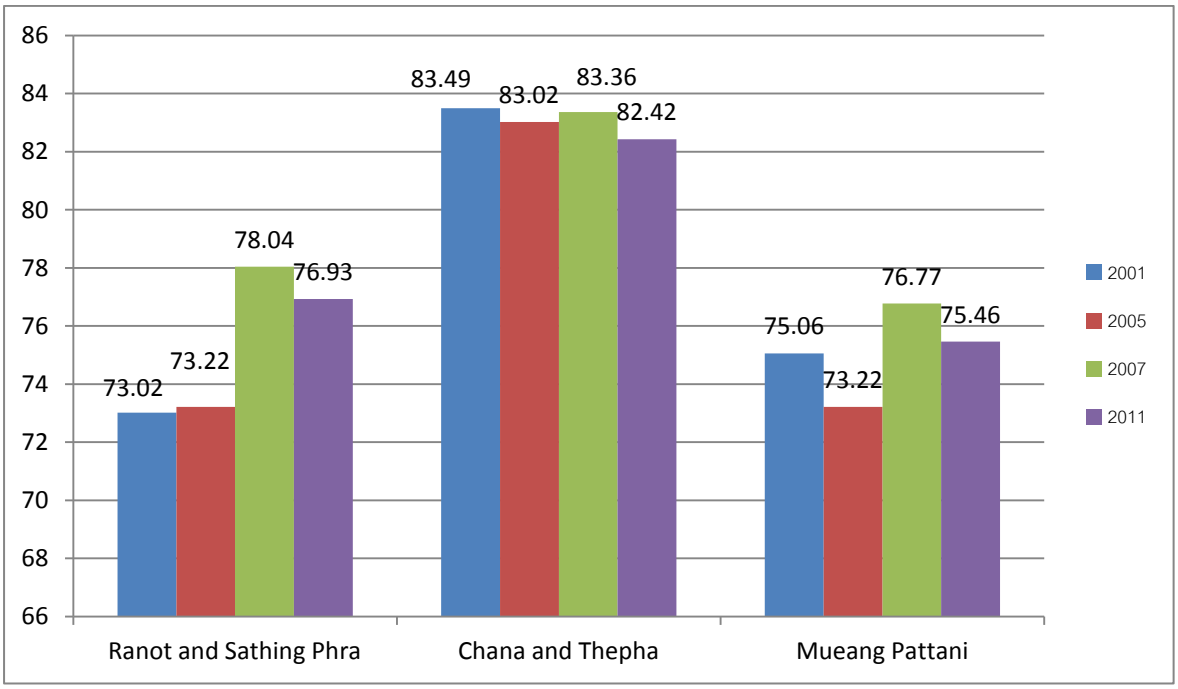
[127] The data is from http://www.thepha-sk.go.th/index.php?cmd=history2, accessed 10 September 2016.

since 2004, as shown in Table 4-16, so that the government included Chana and Thepha into the conflict areas of the Deep South and they are under the special security laws[128].

Mueang district of Pattani comprises 13 subdistricts and 66 villages and has the largest population in the province. Its population included 86.86% Muslims, 12.86% Buddhists, and 0.28% Christians and other religions (Pattani Provincial Office 2008). In the first year of the re-emergence of the conflict and violence in 2004, according to a report by Deep South Watch, 155 violent incidents happened in Mueang Pattani. One of the most tragic incidents in 2004 happened at Krue Se mosque in Mueang district of Pattani causing more than 30 deaths of suspected insurgents *(Isranews*, 1 May 2011). From 2004 to June 2013, Mueang Pattani had 604 violent incidents and became the seventh highest of 33 districts of the three southernmost provinces with violent incidents in the area (*Deep South Watch* 2013).

[128] Chana and Thepha were under the control of the Martial Law Act after 2004. Due to a decrease of violent incidents, the four districts of Songkhla, including Chana and Thepha, have been under The Internal Security Act from 2009 until the present time and the Martial Law Act was cancelled in Songkhla in 2010.

Figure 4-17: Voter turnout of national elections between 2001 and 2011 of the three study areas



Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Remark: Voter turnout, illustrated in the Chart, was based on constituency so the statistics included other districts that were in the same constituency of the studied districts. Moreover, there were changes of constituency in each election as follows:

- In the 2001 and 2005 national elections, Ranot and Sathing Phra districts were in Constituency 4 of Songkhla (Ranot, Sathing Phra, and Krasae Sin districts). Chana and Thepha districts were in Constituency 8 of Songkhla (Na Mom, Chana, and Thepha districts but one subdistrict of Thepha, Lam Phlai was in Constituency 7). Figure 12 shows only voter turnout of Constituency 8 of Songkhla. Mueang district of Pattani (and some parts of Yaring) were in Constituency 1, except two subsidricts of Mueang Pattani were in Constiuency 2. Voter turnout of Mueang district of Pattani shows only the data of Constituency 1.

- In the 2007 national election, Ranot and Sathing Phra districts were included in Constituency 1 together with six districts of Songkhla. Chana and Thepha districts were included in Constituency 3 together with Namom and the two conflict areas, Na Thawi and Saba Yoi districts. Mueang district of Pattani was in Constituency 1 of Pattani with Nong Jik, Kok Pho, Mae Lan, and some parts of Yaring district.
- In the 2011 national election, Ranot and Sathing Phra districts were in Constituency 4 together with Krasae Sin and some parts of Singha Nakorn district. Constituency 8 of Songkhla included only Chana and Thepha District and Constituency 1 of Pattani included Mueang district and some parts of Yaring.

Figure 4-17 shows the differences of not only level of political participation through elections, but also a different pattern of political participation between conflict and non-conflict areas. In the non violence conflict areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra, the conflict and violence that occurred after 2004 did not have much influence on the level of political participation through voting. So, whereas many voters in the conflict areas were affected by the renewed violence that started in 2004, which contributed to a slight decrease of voter turnout in Chana and Thepha in 2005 and a significantly decrease of voter turnout in Mueang Pattani, voter turnout in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts slightly increased in the 2005 national election.

For Ranot and Sathing Phra, a no violent conflict area, and two of the poorest districts of Songkhla, the level of political participation through elections in this constituency was not as high as in the conflict areas of Songkhla. One explanation by a local authority in Sathing Phra about lower voter turnout is that Sathing Phra is one of the poorest districts of Songkhla.

The main incomes were from palm, rice farm, and sea products (as known as *Withi Nod Na Le*)[129]. However, agriculture could not provide sufficient earnings, so many young people moved to other areas for work and better income. Since some local people worked in other areas, they did not go back home to vote, except in local level elections where incentives might be higher[130].

> In rural area, like Ranot and Sathing Phra, national elections are considered as less relevant to their lives. The higher the level of elections, the less they participated. For example, in Sathing Phra, more than 90% of the electorate participated in elections of Phuyaiban; about 80% regularly participated in TAO elections; around 60-70% participated in higher levels of elections[131].

This explanation fits the standard SES model that believed individuals with high socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in politics than individuals with low levels of socioeconomic status (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Some voters, especially working age voters who lived in other provinces, only had their names in house registrations, but they were rarely at home[132]. When there was an election, most of them could not afford to travel to vote. So, they did not participate unless they received some reward in return[133]. Due to a low level of political participation through voting, besides a voting campaign by state agencies, educational

[129] *Withi Nod Na Le* is **said** to represent the way of life of local people in Sathing Phra that depends mostly on the three sources of income, Nod is southern language for Tarn Tanod, or palm; Na is rice farm, and Le means the sea. Interview, a local authority in Sathing Phra, March 2013.

[130] Interview, a local authority in Sathing Phra, March 2013.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Interview, a local authority in Ranot, February 2013.

[133] Interview, a local authority in Sathing Phra, March 2013.

institutions also took action in promoting the election. One university student told that "my teacher (in high school) once took me and my classmates to the poll to vote." [134]

The decrease of voter turnout in the conflict areas in the 2005 general election might be because there was no good choice for people to vote. On the one hand, some voters were disappointed with their former MPs and disagreed with the government's policies toward the southern problem. On the other hand, they knew little of their new candidates and new candidates' capabilities had not yet been proven. So, it was likely that when voters had no good choice, they tended not to participate.

The conflict areas, both low and high violence conflict areas, also shared similar patterns, even though the two patterns were not exactly alike in terms of level. Ranot and Sathing Phra, which represented a non violence conflict area, illustrated a different pattern. The similarity of the chart pattern of voter turnout in the conflict areas could demonstrate that voters in conflict areas shared some similar factors of voting behavior, such as high stakes of violent incidents, grievances from the maltreatment of state authorities, and disappointment in government policies towards the conflict in the Deep South, and these shared factors probably affected voters' participation in the same direction. In addition, if we looked through the percentage of vote share by party in the MP elections of the three case studies, as shown in

[134] Interview, a voter in Ranot November 2012.

Table 4-17, we see some interesting differences among them.

Table 4-17: Percentage of vote share by party in the general elections between 2001 and 2011

Political Party	Ranot and Sathing Phra		Chana and Thepha		Mueang Pattani	
	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage
The 2001 general election						
Democrat	39,013	59.05%	34,503	45.30%	24,553	39.20%
Rassadorn	12,059	18.25%	20,418	26.81%	13,245	21.15%
Thai Rak Thai	7,375	11.16%	1003	1.32%	7,356	11.75%
New Aspiration	1,916	2.90%	17,403	22.85%	16,610	26.52%
Others	5,708	8.64%	2,845	3.73%	865	1.38%
The 2005 general election						
Democrat	49,604	71.07%	45,065	51.99%	28,554	43.19%
Thai Rak Thai	17,360	24.87%	27,551	31.78%	15,663	23.69%
Chart Thai	2,835	4.06%	11,428	13.18%	703	1.06%
Mahachon	No candidate	No candidate	2,638	3.04%	21,194	32.06%
The 2007 general election						
Democrat	572,286	80.89%	179,907	61.74%	105,750	41.17%
People Power	53,220	7.52%	18,502	6.35%	42,097	16.39%
Puea Pandin	12,552	1.77%	85,461	29.33%	70,311	27.38%
Others	69,400	9.81%	7,543	2.59%	38,682	15.06%
The 2011 general election						
Democrat	74,204	92.75%	70,944	84.93%	28,733	37.91%
Pheu Thai	4,878	6.1%	6,386	7.64%	3,723	4.91%
Bhumjaithai	No candidate	No candidate	No candidate	No candidate	24,301	32.06%
Others	922	1.15%	6,206	7.43%	19,033	25.11%

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand

Although the victory of the Democrat party in southern Thailand seemed to be a predictable outcome as the party is a regional party of the South, Table 17 demonstrated that vote share by political party were significantly different among the no, low, and high violence conflict areas. From the elections in 2001-2011, the Democrat candidates received increasing votes from voters in no violent conflict areas, Ranot and Sathing Phra, which increased sharply from 59.05% in 2001 to 92.75% in the 2011 general election.

In addition, since the area has been a stronghold of the Democrat party for more than a decade, national election results in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts were then predictable and had no change before and after the renewed conflict and violence in 2004. "Most local people here adhered to the (Democrat) party and their (Democrat) MPs for a long time. Their bonding with the Democrat party was deep-rooted and hardly changed[135]."

The conflict and violence did not affect them directly as their locations were distant from the conflict areas and their population was mainly Buddhist. So, their decisions of voting were based on other factors, mainly party preference. The policies of the party or candidates' qualifications had less effect. As long as they were stamped with the Democrat brand, voters would buy from this brand name without giving it much thought[136]. One voter confirmed that even now "most villagers in my hometown still believe in the Democrat; they did not care who the candidate was as long as he was the Democrat candidate[137]." However, there were some voters who might be upset with their representatives, for example, one participant in Songkhla complained that his village is always neglected by both national and local politicians. Development was mostly focused only in the center of town, such as areas near markets, but the villages that are far way hardly receive any concern or development by

[135] Interview, a local authority in Ranot, February 2013.

[136] Interview, a voter in Ranot, November 2012.

[137] Interview, a voter in Ranot, November 2012.

their elected candidates[138]. However, some voters did not think it was totally Democrat politicians' fault. Instead, the undeveloped village, for some voters, was partly because "we (voters) did not know how to make a demand to our politicians. We just accept what we are given or not given. We just voted and did not follow up their work to check if our representatives did things as they promised[139]."

The Democrat MP of Ranot and Sathing Phra in 2001 was Winai Senneam, who had won every election since 1992. After the death of Winai in 2009, he was replaced by his nephew Chaiwut Phongphaew. Chaiwut achieved a decisive victory over his competitor from Thai Citizen Party, Jarun Wongkrajang and became an MP of Songkhla from a by-election in 2009[140] and received as high as 92.75% of the vote in the 2011 general election (see Table 17). Chaiwut accepted that the success of his first election was mainly from the influence of the Democrat Party in this area. He clarified that his winning was comprised of three main factors, including the popularity of the Democrat Party, the charisma of Chuan Leekphai, and the political network of the former Democrat MPs in the area[141].

In Chana and Thepha, the popularity of the Democrat party also showed an upward trend, but at a lower rate than non-conflict areas of Songkhla. For Chana and Thepha, a low violence conflict area, voters in this area were found to be very active in politics, as shown by the high rate of voter turnout in national elections between 2001 and 2011 (see Figure 15 and 17). The conflict and violence that occurred in both Chana and Thepha affected political participation through elections similarly to other conflict areas of the three southernmost provinces. After the return of violent incidents in 2004, some voters in Chana and Thepha might have hesitated to participate in the election in 2005. Also, the lack of good alternatives

[138] Interview, a voter in Ranot, November 2012.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Chaiwut Phongphaew won with 143,595 votes, whereas Jarun Wongkrajank received only 11,930 votes for by-election of Songkhla constituency 1.

[141] Interview, Chaiwut Phongphaew, 12 March 2013.

may affect lower voter turnout. However, the degree of conflict and violence in Chana and Thepha district was not so much that many voters were too afraid to go to the ballots. Conversely, the lower degree of conflict and violence created a stronger inspiration in which villagers saw the possibility to stop the conflict and violence themselves through political participation as a way to protect their community from the insurgency. Therefore, they participated in voting at a higher level than other areas of Songkhla that did not have a record of violence.

Moreover, in Chana and Thepha, especially in the Malay-Muslim communities, most villagers were connected and engaged collectively in politics. When they went to the poll, they gathered and came to the polls together[142]. Their voting behavior was different from most voters in urban areas such as Bangkok that tended to go to vote separately. One local authority in Songkhla who had experience of work in both Thai-Buddhist and Malay-Muslim villages also noticed that Thai-Buddhist voters usually had less participation than Malay-Muslims[143]. His observation corresponds to many scholars who believed ethnicity is an important factor of political participation (Wilson and Banfield 1971, Greeley 1974, Nelson 1979, Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981, Lien 1994, Wrinkle et.al 1996, and Albritton and Denton 2008), as discussed earlier in Chapter 2. Experiences of conflict and violence strengthened ethnic bonds and possibly activated their political action that led to higher voter turnout than other areas of Songkhla.

Even though Chana and Thepha is a strong support base of the Democrat party[144], party preference was not a decisive factor for voting of people in this low violence conflict area. Whereas the Democrat candidate achieved decisive victory in Ranot and Sathing Phra, the victory of the Democrat candidates in Chana and Thepha from 2001-2007 was not as

[142] Interview, a business sector in Songkhla, May 2013.

[143] Interview, a local authority **source** in Songkhla, March 2013.

[144] Interview, voters in Chana and Thepha, February-March 2013.

impressive. There were reportedly complaints about the performances of both MPs from the Suwit family, Wijit (father) and Naracha (son) that they were irresponsible, ignored their voters, and did not participate in most community activities (Phinyo 2005: 81-82).

In the midst of conflict and violence, people needed to be sure that their representative could be trusted and had the ability to deliver the policies as promised, especially when they felt being remote from the state due to the conflict situation. One voter expressed his reason for participation in voting after the return of the unrest in 2004 that "I voted to choose a representative who would negotiate with a higher level of state authorities for me since I could not access to them myself[145]." So, the conflict and violence in some ways increased the focus of voters in voting. Even though many voters in Chana and Thepha were party-preference voters, it was not the only factor in choosing their representative. As we can see from the vote share between the 2001 and 2011 elections, the unimpressive performance of the Democrat candidates reduced the loyalty of voters towards the Democrat Party who shifted their votes to other candidates in 2001 and 2007. When the Democrat candidate was changed to Pol.Maj.Gen Surin Palare, a former immigration police officer and senator in 2006, votes for the Democrat party in Chana and Thepha significantly increased again.

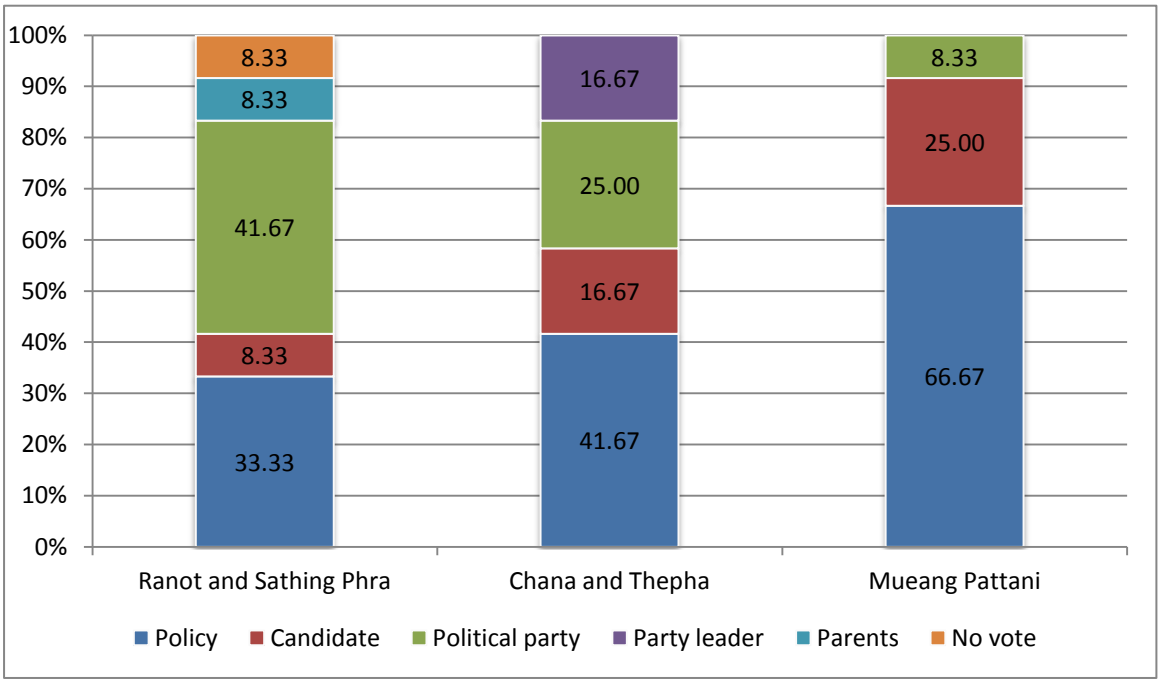
In Mueang Pattani, the high violence conflict area, the data showed the opposite result. Although the Democrat party won in Mueang Pattani, they received the least votes among the three study areas. Moreover, the popularity of the Democrat Party seemed to be decreasing, as shown in Table 17, as votes for the Democrat decreased from 39.20% in 2001 to 37.91% in the 2011 general election. In the past, according to a study on the election in Pattani in 1986 by Phichai, Somchet, and Worawit (1988), personal qualifications of election candidates was a major factor in voting, whereas policies or reputation of a political party had less impact on their decision of voting. However, the above statement might not be true in

[145] Interview, a voter from Thepha, September 2012.

Mueang district of Pattani after the 2005 national election. After the upsurge of unrest in 2004, many voters in Mueang Pattani, including Malay-Muslims, Thai-Buddhists, Chinese-Buddhists, and the very small proportion of Thai-Christians, were affected by conflict and violence, which, in turn, resulted in a change of their voting behavior. Moreover, since the former MP of this constituency, Wairot Phiphitphakdi, moved to the TRT party in the 2005 general election, the change of party meant that his policies had to be changed to comply with the TRT's policies. Some of his former voters might dislike this shift and decided not to follow him.

What led to this change? As discussed earlier, voting behavior is complex since there is no single factor in voting. However, the data on vote share confirms McCargo's statement (2014) that in terms of politics, the southern region is not uniform: there are "two southern Thailands". One is the upper south, including eleven provinces from Chumphon down to Satun and Songkhla, which has been a stronghold of the Democrat Party for decades. Another is the Lower South, including the Malay-Muslim majority provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. At the same time, if we put in an additional factor by considering political participation through elections based on the effect of conflict and violence, we can see another category beside the two, which divided the southern region into two and a half southern Thailands, instead of the two Souths. The additional half is represented in the 4 conflict districts of Songkhla, including Chana and Thepha. The areas are located in Songkhla where most voters were part of the Democrat support base. However, Chana and Thepha voters, due to their ethnic background and experiences of conflict and violence, had different factors in voting. So, the areas shared some similar ties but were not quite the same as the other two southern Thailands in terms of their voting behaviors.

Figure 4-18: How people in the three case study areas voted



From interviews during field research in Songkhla and Pattani with 36 university students in the three case study areas, 12 participants from each area, Figure 4-18 demonstrated the differences in voting decisions among the three case studies. In the non violence conflict area of Ranot and Sathing Phra, the interviews showed that most students voted for political party (41.67%), while just 33.33% of students in Ranot and Sathing Phra gave more importance to policies. Also, their policies of concern might not involve the issue of ongoing conflict and violence since the areas are quite far from the Deep South and the majority are Thai-Buddhists. The policies that participants looked for were, for example, one student voted for a candidate who had an election campaign focused on sport development. Another student voted for a candidate who promised to open more opportunities for youth to participate in political activities. Some interviewees mentioned that their family preferred to

vote for a politician who offered to solve economic and agricultural problems[146]. There were small proportions of participants who were not concerned much about voting. They just voted for whom they were told by their parents in order to keep their political rights. One participant who voted no vote expressed that "I am bored of elections. I participated but I chose no one. I wanted them (political candidates) to know that I am disappointed with all of them[147].

In Chana and Thepha, a low violence conflict area, the percentage of university students who voted based on policy (41.67%) and personal qualification of candidate (16.67%) was higher than in the No violent conflict area, whereas the percentage of voting for a political party was lower than the No violence area. An additional factor was party leader (16.67%). One student who was concerned most with a party leader when voting said that "even though it was the MP election, I did not vote for the MP candidate. I voted to choose whom I wanted to be my prime minister[148]." A state authority in Thepha asserted that the popularity of the Democrat party in Thepha was mainly from the attractiveness of its party leader. "We have to admit that the Democrat Party has an important role in this community (*Chumchon*) because most people have high faith in Chuan Leekphai. His charisma was transmitted to the next Democrat leader, Aphisit Vejjajiva. He has a good personality that is quite similar to Chuan's. He once came to Thepha. Thepha voters really liked him and many came to welcome him on that day[149]."

[146] Interview, university students in Ranot and Sathing Phra, November 2012 and February 2013.

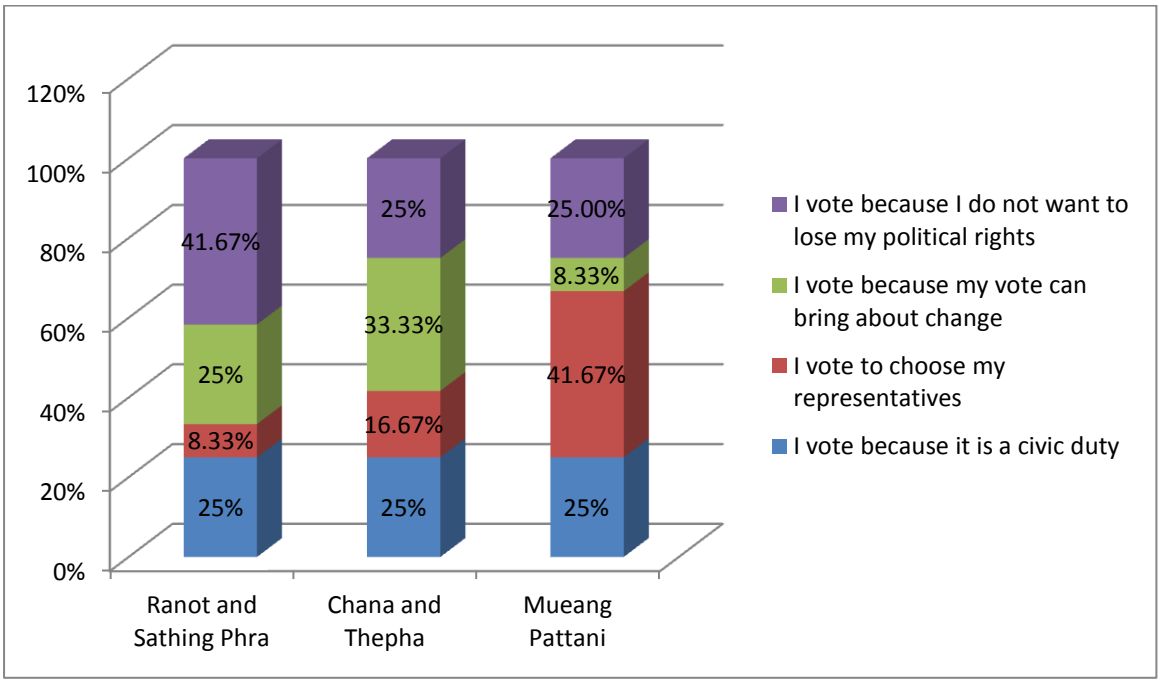
[147] Interview, a university student from Ranot, November 2012.

[148] Interview, a university student from Ranot, November 2012.

[149] Interview, a state authority in Thepha, February 2013.

For Mueang Pattani, the evidence from interviews was quite clear that policy is the most important factor for most students who living in the high violence conflict area. There were 66.67% of students in Mueang Pattani who voted for policies, whereas only 25% and 8.33% voted for individual qualification of candidates and political party, respectively.

Figure 4-19: Why people in the three case study areas voted



In terms of the reasons for voting, the interviews revealed that people from different areas had different reasons for voting based on their expectations in elections and experiences of conflict and violence. In no conflict areas, Figure 4-19, most students from Ranot and Sathing Phra voted because they were concerned about losing political rights[150] if they did not vote (41.67%). Some of them were relatives of local politicians and planned to run in an

[150] The political rights that will be temporarily removed as a consequence of not voting are, for example, the right to run in an election, the right to oppose any election, and the right to impeach state authorities. However, all these rights will be returned if voters participate in voting in the next election.

election themselves in the future. However, their expectations from voting were not as high as in the other two areas. Voters had lower stakes than those in conflict areas, their expectation and need from voting and their representatives was not as high as in the areas facing problems of violence. Thus, some voters just voted to keep their rights rather than to expect in some changes from their votes.

On the other hand, there were 33.33%, the highest proportion of participants in Chana and Thepha, who participated in voting because they believed that voting can bring about change in their communities. The strong belief in voting perhaps resulted in the high voter turnout of Chana and Thepha (see Figure 4-19). On the contrary, only 8.33% of university students in the high violence conflict area of Mueang Pattani believed that their votes could bring change. Instead, the majority of university students from Mueang Pattani (41.67%) participated in voting because they wanted to have their representative in the Thai parliament who would be able to represent the interest of Malay-Muslims[151]. Even though voters in Mueang Pattani still believed that voting could act as a tool to allow their representatives to speak out for them in the Thai parliament, the highest stakes during the violent situation and the aggressive measures of the state seemingly destroyed expectations in voting.

Conclusion

The increasing conflict and violence since 2004 had both negative and positive effects on political participation through elections of people in conflict areas. On the one hand, conflict and violence may have made some people too afraid to go to the ballots. There were many times, as stated earlier, that unidentified groups attacked the polling stations to frighten people away from the poll. So, due to high stakes, people in the conflict areas need a strong

[151] Interview, university students in Mueang Pattani, February 2013.

incentive to go to vote and tend to participate only when they think the election is important. That appears to be the reason why in some elections that were less democratic, such as Senate elections, people participated less over the years.

Despite all the insecure situations, voter turnout in national and local elections in the conflict areas illustrated higher rates than the national average in many elections. The ongoing conflict and violence inspired more people to participate through voting. Based on interviews with people in the Deep South, I found that most voters I had talked to actually believe in voting as an effective way to lessen the conflict and violence. They demonstrated their greater desire for political participation through elections, as shown by the high rate of voter turnout. Voters were willing to take the risk if they thought their participation could lessen the violence.

Moreover, the conflict and violence also changed election behavior of people in the Deep South. In the past, the southern people in the three provinces gave significant importance to personal qualifications of candidates. After the disappointment from the Thaksin government's policy towards the violence in the South after 2004, policies and political parties had more impact on their decisions for voting, as seen from the punishment vote in the 2005 national election where none of the TRT candidates could gain a seat in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat.

The policy of candidates had less influence on voters' decision in local elections. In national elections, conflict and violence inspired people to vote because they believed national policy could help and had stronger power to deal with the ongoing conflict. But for local elections, most people came to vote with different motivations from national elections. Since local politicians were closer to local voters than national politicians, voters, especially those in the conflict areas, needed someone they knew and could trust. So, they tended to vote according to personal relationship rather than policies.

The statistical and interview data explained in this chapter supports the fundamental hypothesis of this study that conflict leads to a greater desire for peaceful political participation. However, since the higher barriers and risks need higher incentives and a stronger belief in the efficiency of the political system, the conflict and violence then can lead to more participation only when people believe participation can make a difference. Most voters in the Lower South went out to vote even when there was the violence but only when they believed their votes would matter. We should expect voter turnout to go down if voters do not believe that an election is effective.

In the next chapter, political participation through non-electoral channels of political participation after 2001 is discussed in order to examine how the ongoing conflict and violence affect other channels of political participation of people in the Deep South.

Chapter 5 : Political Participation through the State

The conflict and violence that re-emerged in 2004 has made political participation in the southern border provinces of Thailand more complicated than those in other regions. However, the southern people who live in the midst of conflict and violence demonstrated their great desire to participate in politics, for example, through elections, as discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter continues to investigate political participation, through the state, of people in the Deep South in order to examine the influence of the prolonged conflict and violence on political participation after 2004. The comparison among the three different levels of violent conflict areas, which are no violence, low violence, and high violence conflict areas in the southern region will also be observed in order to have a clearer picture of how the conflict and violence affect political participation through the state in different circumstances.

Political participation through the state in the conflict areas

Generally, the relationship between the state and Malay-Muslims in the Far South has been negative. Many Malay-Muslims considered the Thai state as "an instrument of terror" (Albritton 2005: 169). Many state bureaucrats, who were sent from other regions with different backgrounds, with some sent down unwillingly as punishment, have brought more harm rather than peace into the area. The negative outlook and experience towards the state authorities differently affected the way people in the southern border provinces participated politically through the state. Some people might boycott political participation and join a separatist group to fight against the Thai state. However, there were many people in the Deep

South who still participated legally within Thai political system, while avoiding interaction with the state.

There are two types of political participation, voluntary and involuntary participation, which will be the focus of this study. Voluntary participation is a "personal willingness to participate" (Eremenko 2011: 6) without being forced by laws or state authorities. Voluntary participation is, for example, participating in public hearings, sharing opinions at village meetings, organizing civil society activities, and taking part in village defense volunteers. Involuntary participation refers to forms of activities that a person is forced to engage by laws or state authorities. Involuntary participation includes, for example, participating in trials due to being arrested, contacting state authorities to get a license, and contacting a public prosecutor in security cases. Involuntary participation may not tell us anything because this kind of participation is not a person's choice. However, involuntary participation is important as it greatly impacted on voluntary participation and vice versa. This section will then focus on both voluntary and involuntary political participation through the state by dividing into three main state actors, security officials, local authorities, and judicial officers, in order to inspect to what extent the ongoing conflict and violence influence political participation and interaction between the Thai state and its people in the conflict areas of the Far South.

Security officers

Political participation through security officers can be in many forms, both voluntary and involuntary participation. Some local people participated voluntarily with the military by, for example, attending to the meetings organized by the military agencies, such as ISOC, directly contacting military officers to ask for some help regarding violent incidents, and working together in community development projects, such as small dam construction.

However, political participation through security officers during the conflict and violence were mostly in form of involuntary participation, such as being arrested for trial, being forced to give some information, and being questioned and monitored under surveillance.

Since the re-emergence of conflict and violence in 2004, security officers, especially the military, were the most criticized state actors who were always criticized for their aggressiveness and maltreatment of local Malay-Muslims. There were some periods during Thaksin's first term in the government that security issues in the Deep South were in the hands of the Thai police. After the controlling power in the Deep South was returned to the Thai army following the coup in 2006, the Thai military had the leading role in managing the conflict and violence in the Far South.

The military is a powerful state agency not only because it has weapons but also because three special laws applied in the conflict areas of the southern region allowed the military to have utmost power there. The three special security laws, including the 1914 Martial Law Act, the 2005 Executive Decree on Government Administration in States of Emergency, and the 2008 Internal Security Act, have different regulations and levels of enforcement. The main differences of the three special security laws are summarized in Table 5-1

Table 5-1: The special security laws in the three southern border provinces and four districts of Songkhla

	The 1914 Martial Law Act	The 2005 Executive Decree on Government Administration in States of Emergency	The 2008 Internal Security Act
Enforcement area	Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat[1]	Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, excluding Mae Lan district of Pattani[2]	Mae Lan district of Pattani, and the four districts of Songkhla
Superior power	The military	Prime Minister	ISOC
Search and arrest	Without court warrant	With court warrant	Not mentioned
Detention	No longer than 7 days without court warrant	No longer than 30 days with court warrant	Not mentioned
Political rallies	Prohibited	Prohibited	Allowed
Amnesty	Not mentioned	Not Mentioned	Allowed

Remarks: 1) The Martial Law Act was repealed in the four district of Songkhla on 4 May 2010

2) The Emergency Decree in Mae Lan district of Pattani was revoked in December 2010 and replaced by the Internal Security Act.

Political participation was more restricted under the special security laws. The three special security laws not only increased the climate of fear but also limited voluntary participation of people in the Deep South. For example, the two provisions under section 9 of the Emergency Decree granted the state power to censor the media and social movements and gatherings is controlled. Even though Anand Panyarachun and the NRC working group tried to convince Prime Minister Thaksin to postpone some of the provisions that would block political participation, including section 9, Thaksin agreed to suspend only a few provisions, such as the permission to tap telephones, with most of the NRC disputed provisions remaining in force.

The latest security law, the 2008 Internal Security Act, enforced in the least violent areas including the four conflict-area districts of Songkhla and later Mae Lan district of Pattani, is considered to be the most moderate. Political participation under this Act is more permissible. Political rallies and social movements are not banned. But most importantly, and arguably the most disagreeable provision is Section 21, which provides a channel for accused persons to surrender voluntarily who will then be free without charges after participating in a rehabilitation program of the military for no longer than 6 months. Nevertheless, the number of Malay-Muslims who joined this program was too few to assess its success.

Considering the statistical data, there were a small number of Malay-Muslim militants who voluntarily surrendered under Section 21. According to an ISOC Region 4 report, there were only 4 Malay-Muslim militants who successfully participated in the rehabilitation programs from 2008 to 12 March 2015[152]. Moreover, after 6 months of participating with the military program, the suspected Malay-Muslims were sent back to their communities and lived in a difficult situation in which the Thai military was still uncertain of their loyalty and their neighbors suspect them of being spies of the Thai state (Don 2012: 7). The small number of militants participating in the military's rehabilitation programs showed that promoting voluntary participation in the conflict areas needed careful comtemplation. The distrust of the military caused suspicion of its activities that impeded local people from participating. Moreover, local people participating with the Thai state might be estranged from their community because villagers were not certain whether people returning from the military program might work secretly for the Thai military as a spy[153].

[152] The website of the ISOC Region 4 reported on 12 March 2015 that besides the 4 cases that successfully passed the training program under section 21 of the Internal Security Act during 2008 – 12 March 2015, there was one case waiting for court judgement of passing the program in place of being charged, and another case who had been participating in the program for 6 months between 12 March and 8 September 2015. For more details, visit http://www.southpeace.go.th /th/News/General/new-580313-1.html, accessed on 9 January 2016.

[153] Interview, a military officer in the Deep South, February 2013.

In addition, the enforcement of the three special security laws had an immense impact on the image of security officers, which affected directly the level of political participation through the state. Although the three special security laws were often criticized for increasing conflict and violence rather than lessening the conflict situation, the true fear of villagers was not from the laws. Instead, the true terror was from some law enforcement officers, who excessively extended their power through the laws[154]. The draconian and aggressive enactment created fear in communities. The maltreatment at the hands of state authorities occurred almost every day (Srisompob and Panyasak 2006: 112). Many local Malay-Muslims then tended to avoid contacting state security officers, whose works should make people feel safer rather than more afraid.

The negative impression of local people towards the Thai state was implanted since they were young. According to interviews, some participants said that they were told negative tales about the Thai state authorities since they were in Ponoh schools. Some experienced forced participation and state maltreatment themselves. However, the negative perception of the Thai state that they received either way made it more difficult to build up voluntary participation through the state. As one Malay-Muslim university student who studied at a Ponoh School in the Deep South stated,

[154] Adilan Aliishoh, a lawyer with the Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation, talked about the fear of the locals in the Seminar on the Executive Decree on Government Administration in States of Emergency and the Southern Region Problem-Solving in Bangkok on 18 December 2008, see Pakorn Puengnetr and Romadon Panjor, 'Ko Or Ro Mo No kab kan pluk dan kodmai kwammankong sontab nai chaidan tai' [the ISOC and the promotion of overlapping security laws in southern border provinces of Thailand], *Deep South Watch*, (published online 22 December 2008) <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/264>, accessed 7 March 2016.

> My friends are very radical and very biased against the Thai state. Most Malay-Muslims, especially those who study only in Ponoh schools, tend to hate the state. The direct experiences of aggressive officials made them hate the Thai state even more. This group, I believe, have a high chance to join the separatists[155].

The nature of the military's work unavoidably brought people into involuntary participation. The security officers had to deal with intelligence as it is one of their main duties to catch the separatists. They were determined to find a mastermind, but they made things worse. Such work needed cooperation and participation from local people but the military's excessive use of power discouraged local people from giving information voluntarily to state officials (International Crisis Group 2005: 7). Even though the police and the military could get information from local people through forced participation, this kind of participation is seen as short-term or just one-time participation. The local people might have to participate because of fear but involuntary participation rarely brings about positive participation, and may not lead to useful information. Local people did not want to participate because the mistrust of most Malay-Muslims towards the Thai state blocked them from voluntary participation.

The operations of the Thai military in the conflict and violent areas of the Malay-Muslim majority provinces did not focus only on warlike operations. The Thai military applied both soft and hard tactics. These two strategies were known as the hawk way and the dove way[156]. The hawk strategy of the military referred to the fighting and warfare-like operations, as well as the torture and aggressive methods of interrogation.The dove strategy, on the contrary, was more focused on public relations and community development, which

[155] Interview, a Malay-Muslim student in Pattani, February 2013.

[156] Interview, a scholar in Pattani, September 2012.

was mostly applied in villages that had lower degrees of conflict and violence. The military tried to improve its relationship with local people through religious leaders, the most respected people in Malay-Muslim communitities. “We (the military) arranged many meetings and development projects and invited religious leaders to participate with us. We have to win the heart of a person the villagers respect the most first and then that person could help us to improve our relationship with the villagers”, said a military officer working many years in the conflict areas of the Deep South[157].

The military also developed relationships with local people through university students. According to interviews with university students in Pattani, there are many student groups and projects that are supported by the military budget and the SBPAC[158]. One student activist explained that his student group asked for financial support from the military and the SBPAC. “They gave us funds to organize activities. I think they wanted to prevent us from turning against the state and wanted us to promote the roles of the military in the conflict areas”, said a student activist in Pattani[159]. However, the student admitted that voluntary experiences from contacting and participating with the military in his student group’s activities more or less changed his perception on the military. As he explained,

> I used to hate all state security officers but my view was changed to understand that there were both good and bad soldiers. They, sometimes, had to be aggressive, but it is because the special laws gave the military special power. It is not because the military hated us all[160].

[157] Interview, a military officer in Pattani, September 2012.

[158] Interview, university students in Pattani, January and February 2013.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

Both strategies were deemed necessary in dealing with the conflict in the Deep South and directly impacted the pattern and level of political participation. The hawk strategy was considered vital in fighting with insurgents who used violence to destroy innocent people. Nonetheless, applying only hard tactics could just temporaily stop one attack at a time, but could not win the hearts and trust of the locals. In addition, the hawk strategy could strengthen negative participations through, for example, interrogation, which resulted in pushing more people away from the state. The Dove trategy was therefore considered essential in promoting voluntary participation and good relationships between the military and the Malay-Muslims in order to draw in more people to support the Thai state instead of joining the insurgency. However, the direction of military strategies mainly depended on the state's policies. When the government changed, the policies on the Deep South changed accordingly, depending on the attitude of the government leaders. For example, the hawk strategy was seriously implemented during the Thaksin government to capture offenders and masterminds of the violence. While Thaksin believed in draconian methods in dealing with the violence, the Surayud government believed that if the security officers behaved in more acceptable ways, there would be a higher possibility to diminish the violence (McCargo 2008: 89).

The two strategies had different effects on political participation. The hard tactics were aimed at not only overcoming the militants but also subjugating the locals to the Thai state. However, after more than ten years of controlling the conflict and violent areas with an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth strategy, the results were not very impressive as the violent attacks were still high and many Malay-Muslims felt more afraid and distrustful of security officers. Involuntary participation was high but voluntary participation was low. People tended to avoid direct contact with security officers, which created the low level of voluntary participation. Later, the military initiated community development and public relations

programs to build a better relationship and improve the image of the security officers. Thai soldiers were sent to talk to villagers and help in village development. Moreover, based on conversations with people and authorities in the conflict areas, many community meetings were arranged among the military, local bureaucrats, civil society, and local people to discuss and exchange views on not only conflict and violence but also economics and other isssues[161].

Promoting voluntary participation could, to some extent, build trust. Some local people were less afraid of contacting the military when they needed help. The military sometimes received complaints from local people in the conflict areas when they were in trouble because the local politicians did not distribute local budget fairly.

> We (the military) could not refuse when people contacted us for some assistance. However, there were many times that our involvement in a local community led to a conflict of interest with the local politicians. For example, when the military came to build a road in some remote area in the conflict district, some local politicians were dissatisfied because they thought we took away their job and budget. So, they sometimes did not participate with us as a way to express that they did not want the military to be involved in their business.[162]

However, although the military tried to improve their image and participated more in community projects, the distrust of the Thai military still remained. A better relationship was actually built up but only at low levels to a small group of military, who directly met and participated with local Malay-Muslims. For example, one university student mentioned that he and his village in Thepha District had a good relationship with the military. "I feel safer having the military around. When there was a violent incident, the military would always be the first to come. I and the military also worked together to build weirs and take part in some

[161] Interview, military officers, local government officers, and local people in the Deep South, September 2012 and February 2013.

[162] Interview, a military office in the Deep South, September 2012.

community activities[163]," said a Malay-Muslim university student from Thepha district of Songkhla. Yet overall, according to interviews, the general image of Thai military was still at best questionable.

This indicates that in the conflict areas, trust and participation depends on personal relationships with state officials. There is no trust of the state as an institution or any of its parts. Consequently, whenever a state official is transferred, trust and participation disappears. If individual officials are not willing to reach out to people and build relationships, there is no participation, since the institutional face of the state is not trusted, just some of its individual members.

The problem of suspicion happened on both sides. On the one hand, many Malay-Muslims suspected Thai security officers due to their unjust and aggressive performance. On the other hand, many security officers doubted local Malay-Muslims and were afraid that some Malay-Muslims would turn against the Thai state. So, the Thai military always monitored almost every activity in the villages and forced some local people to participate in interrogation. Some local elites, especially religious leaders and even local bureaucrats who the Thai government approved to work for the Thai state, were always interviewed and observed by security officers. Many Malay-Muslims considered the military surveillance as a form of harassment (McCargo 2011: 839). The dissatisfaction from forced participation of local leaders added another difficulty in improving positive participation through the state because the linkage between the Thai state and locals was broken. Political participation was then lower and more difficult without encouragement from Malay-Muslim community leaders.

[163] Interview, a university student in Songkhla, February 2013.

The military operations also caused a feeling of inequality among local people. Some people, especially those in rural conflict areas, felt that they were treated unequally. "I feel that people in the urban areas, have more rights and state authorities respected their rights and treated them better than they respect and treat us, the rural people. For us, as a rural person, state authorities could do anything they want without considering our rights, but for people in urban areas, the state officials are more careful and work according to the laws[164]."

The problem of trust not only occurred for local people but the Thai government and the military also distrusted the Malay-Muslims. Military personnel, especially the high ranking, had to be carefully selected. The recruitment of Malay-Muslims soldiers to work for the Royal Thai Army in their hometown might be difficult since it involved intelligence and secret information[165]. So, while there were requests from some local people for Malay-Muslim soldiers to work in the conflict areas of the Deep South, it would be unlikely for the Royal Thai Army to approve it. Moreover, the Fourth Army Region, which is responsible for the southern region, lacked trained soldiers to take care of the conflict areas of the Deep South[166]. So, the military forces in the Deep South were mostly soldiers from other provinces. For example, the Yala Task Force was sent from the the Third Army Region, which usually operated in the northern provinces of Thailand[167].

Although the Royal Thai Army trained soldiers for three months about the culture, religion, and topography of the Deep South, the different backgrounds of soldiers and local people still caused difficulties for the military in developing good relationships and drawing more participation from local people.

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[164] Interview, a Malay-Muslim in Pattani, February 2013.

[165] Interview, a military officer in the Deep South, March 2013.

[166] Ibid

[167] Ibid.

> Most of our operations, especially civil affairs, needed local people to communicate with villagers. Some Malay-Muslims cannot speak Thai. Some might be able to but they pretended that they did not understand us in order to avoid participating with us[168].

Besides the Royal Thai Army, paramilitary troops were also sent to help the Thai military look after the conflict areas. The paramilitary originated in 1978 to help the Royal Thai military fighting against the Communists and also to take care of some other internal security issues, especially at the borderlands (Ball 2007: 9). The paramilitary forces comprised short-trained volunteers from various backgrounds age between 18-30, both male and female, and having at least a high school diploma or its equivalent[169]. However, the paramilitary was criticized as a part of the weakness of military operation in the Deep South (Ball 2007, International Crisis Group 2007 and Ockey 2008). Its reputation was often negative, recounted as inexperience, ill-disciplined, and out of control (Ball 2007: 9 and International Crisis Group 2007: 12). One local politician mentioned that he found some paramilitary troops were drug addicted and some had love affairs with Malay-Muslim women. He said "I believed it was not a state policy that caused problems; it was state authorities themselves that kept people away from the Thai state[170]."

The outside soldiers mostly had little background on the local history, culture, and religion. Some might even have looked at local people as enemies so they did not care much about Malay-Muslim villagers. For example, the tragedy at Tak Bai in 2004 demonstrated the careless management of the Thai army in delivering protestors from Tak Bai police station to the army camp. "If they (the security officers) used more care, they might do things slightly

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[168] Ibid.

[169] From Announcement of the third Army Area on 24 November 2015, Re: Recruitment of reserve officers and civilians to join volunteer ranger force (in Thai). <http://www.army3.mi.th/army3_internet/admin3/doc/20151125_135921.%E0%B8%A2.58.pdf>, accessed 20 October 2016.

[170] Interview, a local politician in Songkhla, September 2012.

better," said one local person in Pattani[171]. The different background of the military not only resulted in incompetence to tackle the conflict and violence but also created more fear and mistrust of local Malay-Muslims towards Thai security officers, which could lead to a more distant relationship between them (Ockey 2008: 25).

Political participation through the state in the conflict areas of the Lower South was also easily discouraged by the suspicions and rumors of the use of the military budget. Due to the huge amount of military budget that was dumped into the areas after the renewal of the conflict and violence in 2004, many people queried the use of the budget and some even mentioned that there were relations between violent incidents and an increase in the military budget or in promotions in military positions.

> There was talk in southern towns that whenever the budget for secret activities was cut, one would see increasing violence. If there were changes among high-ranking officials or when someone wanted to get a higher rank, violence would escalate. When a large number of separatists surrendered, the police or military personnel involved would be promoted (Rung 2007: 137-138).

Although it is quite possible that the insurgents might instigate local Malay-Muslims to hate state authorities by creating rumors and doubts towards the security officers, the increasing suspicions alienated many Malay-Muslims from contacting security officers. Some Malay-Muslims even believed that some violent incidents were created by the military to cause more difficulties and fears in local communities in order to keep its power and budget in the conflict areas, with some academics and journalists calling it "the industry of security"[172]. When local people mistrusted military operations, voluntary participation with the military was less likely to happen.

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[171] Interview, a Malay-Muslim in Pattani, February 2013.

[172] Interview, a journalist in Songkhla, 4 October 2012.

Another factor that indirectly affected political participation through the security officers in the conflict areas was the support of the majority of the country outside the conflict zone. The concern was the different point of view regarding aggressive actions of the military. The different views between people in the conflict areas and those who were not affected directly by the violent incidents were also important in determining the role of security officers and level of political participation. While soldiers were seen as heroes by people outside the conflict areas, they were seen as evil by many Malay-Muslims in the Far South. Whereas many Thai people in other regions supported the military's violent strategy in dealing with the conflict and violence in the Deep South, Malay-Muslims in the conflict areas generally disliked it and wanted the military to leave and allow local people to look after themselves. Below are some examples of opinions shared by interviewees from non violence conflict areas towards the violence in the Deep South;

> The government should take it (the violence in the South) more seriously. The government should send more troops to wipe out the separatists. The troops should be skilled and experienced[173].

> The state should let the military take care of the violence because the military has weapons. If the Deep South did not have soldiers with guns to look after it, it could have more violent incidents. The security problems should thus be resolved only by the security officers[174].

When the majority of the country supported the draconian methods and hard-line approach of the military, it was more likely that the military would continue the use of excessive force in the areas. The relationship between the military and many Malay-Muslims was then more difficult to improve, which exacerbated the low level of voluntary participation through the state.

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[173] Interview, a university student from non-conflict areas of Songkhla, February 2013.

[174] Interview, a university student from non-conflict areas of Songkhla, February 2013.

Besides, the militant operations that mostly targeted security officers and anyone who cooperated with them immensely impeded local people from getting close to security officers in order to avoid stray bullets or bombs. So, getting close to security officers was dangerous for local people, let alone cooperation and participation with security officers. Moreover, when military bases were hit, some locals lost trust in Thai security forces and looked at them as incompetent. Some even said "they cannot even defend themselves, let alone defend the public" (Rung 2007: 160). Therefore, the militant attacks could weaken the military force and discourage local people from working with Thai state agencies.

During the conflict and violence, voluntary participation through security officers might be difficult to promote since their major responsibility was to suppress the insurgents. Hard tactics were used in threatening the separatists and forced participation might be hard to avoid. Involuntary participation where some Malay-Muslims had been forced to participate through aggressive practices negatively affected political participation. Although there was a small group of the military operated civil affairs and participated with villagers in many community development projects, the general image of the military still remained unchanged. Individual state officials, no matter how effective they are, cannot really change things, because they build trust in themselves, not in the state. When they leave, trust will go with them. When local people do not feel trust in state institutions, they do not voluntarily participate.

Justice Officers

The conflict areas of the southernmost provinces are ruled under the special security laws that created complication and some limitations of justice system in the areas. During the conflict situation, justice officers had important roles in supporting both voluntary and

involuntary forms of participation. Even though the increasing number of violent incidents led to an increase of security cases and rising number of people participating involuntarily in investigation and trials. However, local people in the conflict areas also participated voluntarily, even during the conflict. For example, they brought their civil cases to the court; they contacted justice officers for consultation on some legal issues. This section, thus, would like to investigate political participation through justice officers in both voluntary and involuntary forms to find out how people in the conflict areas participate in the justice system and whether or not both forms of participation impacted each other.

The problems of excessive power given to the security officials under Martial Law and the Emergency Decree, especially the power to search, arrest, and detain a suspect without charge, led to many complaints of human rights violations and made the cooperation between the locals and state officials much more difficult. One of the complaints about Martial Law and the Emergency Decree was pointed out by an interviewee from Pattani. He said,

> I think they (Martial Law and the Emergency Decree) have only disadvantages. The laws too fully allowed excessive roles of the military. The special laws could not stop the conflict but instead pushed more people, especially those who are only suspected insurgents, to join the separatists. They became bandits (chon tai) because of these laws. When they (suspects) were arrested, detained, and tortured, resentment developed and increased. The laws then did not help anybody, but turned people against the Thai state[175].

[175] Interview, a university student from Pattani, February 2013.

The right to justice and fair trial was regarded as a fundamental right of all humanity that needed to be protected, as announced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assemply in Paris on 10 December 1948[176]. However, for many suspected persons in the Deep South, justice could be easily corrupted by security officers during the interrogation and investigation at the first stage of judicial process. The judiciary was the only state institution that could balance the excessive power of law enforcement officers, so many Malay-Muslims wished to lay their hopes for justice in the hands of the Thai court.

After the re-emergence of conflict and violence in 2004, the issue of justice became one of the most important issues that concerned many Malay-Muslims, academics, and civil society activists who worked in the conflict areas. Also, the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) realized the problem of injustice, including "injustice at the hands of state officials and shortcomings in the judicial process" was one of the main problems that prolonged conflict and violence in the three Malay-Muslim provinces (NRC 2006: 3). Even the former head of the government, Surayud Chulanond, accepted that "the problem in the South was really about justice" (McCargo 2008: 89). The problem of justice massively impacted political participation through the state in the conflict areas. The justice system brought people to involuntary participation. They had no choice but to take part in prosecution of their security cases. Actually, the problems that caused injustice in the three southern Malay-Muslim provinces could be found at every level of the judicial process. Not only did the state security officials cause prejudice and dissatisfaction where many people were concerned, the justice system and the performances of judicial officers were also another important source of the problem that enlarged the conflict and hindered local people from voluntary participation.

[176] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html>, accessed 12 January 2016.

The state actors responsible in the judicial process included the police, who had the duty of arresting, finding evidence, and investigating suspects at the first stage, and the military, which also had power to arrest and investigate suspects under the special security laws before sending them to the police (inquiry officials) for processing the cases further. The prosecutors had to consider if the case files sent by the investigating officials were strong enough to forward to the court, and finally the judges who adjudicate the cases.

Due to being a designated area under the three special security laws, the judicial process in the southern border provinces was more complicated and contentious than in any other region of the country. The use of the three special laws in the Deep South brought about more distrust and insecurity rather than minimizing the conflict's intensity in the areas. More importantly, they indirectly promoted forced participation rather than voluntary participation. The basic right to justice and fair trial has been limited under the application of special security laws. For example, under Martial Law, a civilian, who became a suspect based on only classified military information, could be arrested and detained at an undisclosed location for interrogation up to seven days without charge or court warrant. The arrested person was also restricted access to lawyers and medical services and his family was not told about his whereabouts. Moreover, many suspects who were detained by the military claimed that they were tortured for information and confession by many brutal strategies[177]. So, the basic legal protections for a suspect were more often and more strongly violated under the special laws as compared to those of the Criminal Code.

[177] For more information on the alleged torture in southern Thailand, read Amnesty International 2009, "Thailand: Torture in the Southern Counter-Insurgency" (London: Amnesty International Publications) and Pornpen Kongkajornkiat, '12 pee karn thum-ngarn reung karn yuti karn thorramarn lae karn patibat yang rai manussayatham nai Pattani' [12 years of work to stop torture and inhuman acts in Pattani], Cross Cultural Foundation, (published online 10 January 2016) <https://voicefromthais.wordpress.com/2016/01/10/> , accessed 11 January 2016.

The security cases filed by inquiry officers were frequently criticized, for lacking adequate evidence. So, when the cases were brought to the judicial process, there was a high possibility that the public prosecutors and the judges would issue non-prosecution orders.

Table 5-2: Number of security cases in the three southern border provinces and four districts of Songkhla between 2004 and 31 May 2015

Number of security cases	**9,933**
Number of security cases filed by the investigation police	1,904
Number of security cases that were issued prosecution orders by prosecutors	827
Number of security cases that were dismissed by the court	431

Source: *Manager,* 25 June 2015

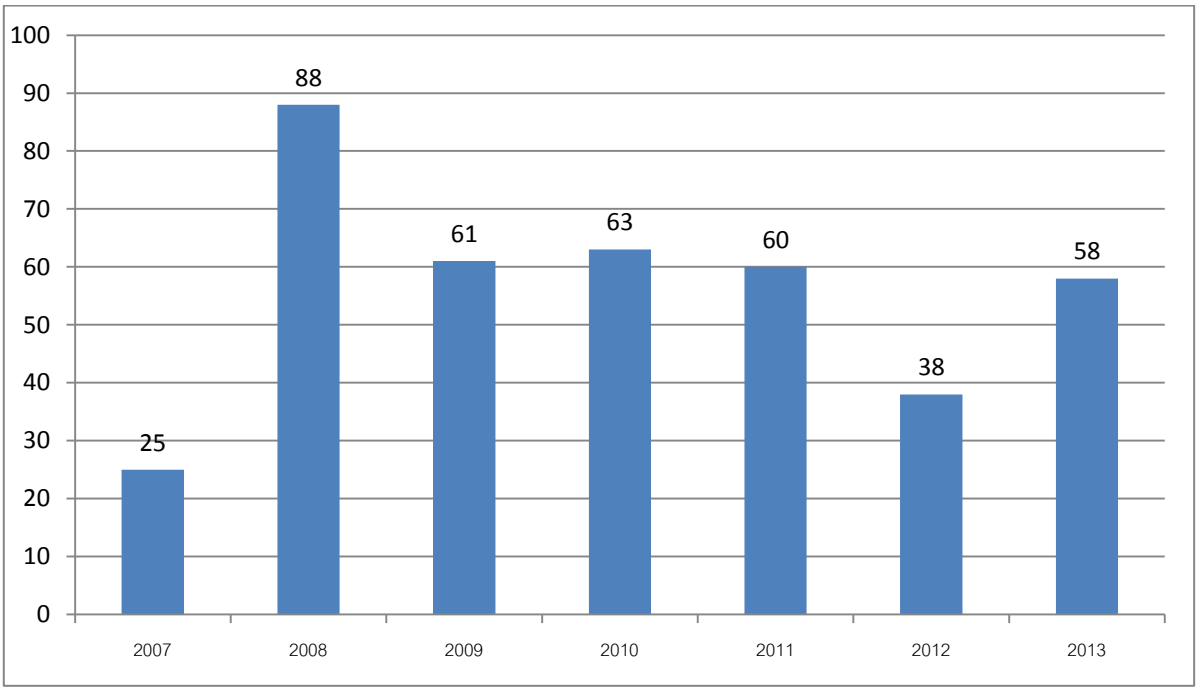
As shown in Table 5-2, the security cases that were disapproved by the prosecutors and dismissed by the judges in the three southern provinces were high. There were less than 50% or only 827 out of 1,904 cases between 2004 and 31 May 2015 where prosecutors decided to issue prosecution orders, which means 1,077 cases or 56.57% were dismissed by the prosecutors. Among all the 827 cases issued prosecution orders between 2004 and March 2015, there were 431 cases or 52.12% where the court ordered dismissals. Therefore, among all of the 9,933 security cases from 2004 to May 2015, there were only 396 cases (or 3.99%) that were not dismissed and were prosecuted through the final legal process. This may possibly indicate that the interrogation and detention itself comprised the intended punishment of suspects, outside the legal system, and might be a contributing factor to the widespread sense of injustice felt by many in the South.

A major reason of the high rate of dismissed cases was because there was insufficient evidence to prove guilt. Most of the time forced confessions were the only evidence that the police had, and then used it to bring charges against suspects, despite the fact that confession under torture was legally prohibited by laws[178]. The forced confession was not only wrong because of the prohibition by laws, the confessions and evidence obtained through torturing was also considered politically unproductive and misinformed (Zawacki 2012). There were many Malay-Muslims who were arrested and detained by the military and claimed they were tortured and forced to confess by the security forces. Some of them brought their cases to courts with help from the Muslim Attorney Center Foundation (MAC)[179].

[178] According to section 226 of the Thai Criminal Procedure Code, it stated that any evidence derived wrongfully by unlawful means is prohibited.

[179] The Muslim Attorney Center Foundation was founded in 2004 by a human rights lawyer who later mysteriously in disappeared, Somchai Neelapaichit, allegedly while in the hands of security forces.

Figure 5-1: Numbers of alleged torture cases received by the Muslim Attorney Center Foundation between 2007 and 2013 in the three southern border provinces and four districts of Songkhla



Source: The Muslim Attorney Center Foundation

According to the MAC, the Foundation received a total of 393 cases of alleged torture during detention in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and 4 districts of Songkhla between 2007 and 2013 (see

Figure 5-1) and 33 cases in 2015[180]. However, with a limitation of the judicial process under the Martial Law Act that protected state officials from prosecution, none of the security forces have ever been brought to punishment or successfully put on trial for human rights abuses (Zawacki 2012); some financial compensation has been paid to victims or their families however. The number of alleged torture cases from the MAC could imply that justice in the Deep South has been undermined.

The forced confession through torture leaves a permanent imprint that potentially pushes people away from the Thai state. The fury from being tortured by state officials was felt not only by the suspects, but also their family and Malay-Muslim friends and neighbors. Negative stories about the Thai state torturing Malay-Muslims then spread and destroyed trust of, not only the military, but also the justice system. In a conflict area, word of mouth had a strong impact and quickly led to a higher degree of suspicion between the Thai state and Malay-Muslims[181].

Another reason for lacking sufficient evidence in security cases was because some witnesses refused to participate in testifying[182]. Living in the midst of conflict and violence where most people distrusted each other, some local people were afraid that if they participated in the justice system, it might bring danger to themselves or their families, one way or another. They then tended to avoid participating in the justice process.

The high rate of dismissals of security cases in the Deep South could be considered in both positive and negative terms. On the one hand, the high rate of case dismissals reflected the failure of the justice system and investigation process that was unable to find the right

[180] For more details on acts of torture, see the Report on the Situaion of Human Rights Violation as a result of the enforcement of the special security laws in the southern border provinces [Rai ngarn sathanakarn karn lamerd sitthi manussayachon chak karn bungkhubchai kodmai phiset nai phuentee changwat chaidantai], Muslim Attorney Center Foundation, <http://th.macmuslim.com/?p=1025>, accessed 2 February 2016.

[181] Interview, a journalist in Songkhla, September 2012.

[182] Ibid.

culprits and punish them. The disappointment and mistrust in the justice system resulted in a low level of contacting the state and it also indirectly led to an increase of conflict and violence. Some of the local people in conflict areas believed it was easier to kill someone for revenge than bring the case to court and wait for justice. Even if they took legal action, they believed, there was a high chance that justice officers could convict no one[183].

Moreover, the maltreatment of the military in the interrogation process and the inability of the investigating police officers in finding sufficient evidence before charging the suspects in security cases were widely criticized and increased the resentment against the Thai state officers. The forced participation pushed away many Malay-Muslims from participating voluntarily in other political activities with state authorities. Furthermore, the distrust in the witness protection program made witness feel unsafe and they hesitated to get involved with the cases or participate willingly in the legal process[184]. So, both Malay-Muslims and Thai Buddhists who lived in the midst of conflict tended not to participate as witnesses in cases and avoided giving any information to state officials due to a concern for their safety, and that made the work of investigating police much harder.

On the other hand, the high number of dismissed cases might demonstrate the reliability of the judicial power, creating a positive-trustworthy atmosphere. The judgement of public prosecutors and judges in refusing to prosecute the weak cases that had insufficient evidence revealed that the justice system of Thailand did not fall under the state power and most cases were adjudged fairly. Moreover, the fair trials could save the guiltless person from punishment. However, suspects who were arrested and detained under the special security laws had to lose their freedom for about 2-5 years[185] without being judged guilty from the

[183] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, February 2013.

[184] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, September 2012.

[185] According to the research by the Office of the Attorney General Region 9 and the Asia Foundation, the security cases mostly took 81 days for the inquiry officer to submit a case to the prosecutors; 32 days for the prosecutor to issue a prosecution order; 461 days for the Court of First

first day of detention until the final judicial process had been done (*Isranews*, 27 January 2012). Thus, some Malay-Muslims became concerned that if participating through the justice system needed to take that much time, is it better, instead of being in jail, to give up the case and look for justice somewhere else[186]?

Brutal interrogation and 2-5 years in prison are punishment without due process. If officials torture suspect, then put them in jail without bail for 2 years or more, they have already punished them. The long process of justice could imply that the officials perhaps do not care much whether the Malay-Muslim suspects are convicted or not. In this sense, punishment is outside the hands of the judiciary entirely, and in the hands of those who arrest suspects. A civil society activist in Pattani stated that some suspects, after they were released by a judge's order, were prohibited by security officials from returning to their village. They had to stay at a mosque or in the jungle. She claimed "it is a policy of 'separating fish from water'. The military might want to observe if these suspects were not in a village, would the violence decrease. However, the violent incidents still occurred even without these suspects in a village[187]." Barring suspects from their own homes is yet another form of extrajudicial punishment.

Experience with violent acts and improper practices in the justice system pushed the victims to find a way to fight for their rights and freedom. Some of them tried to make their problems known by asking for help from civil society activists who had better legal knowledge and political skill in contacting and participating with state officials. Somchai Neelapaichit, a lawyer and a human rights activist, was one of the persons who stood up to

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Instance to reach a judgement, which took almost 2 years for the whole process. If there were a request for a new hearing, it took about 424 days for the case to reach the Court of Appeal and another 858 days for the Supreme Court to reach a judgement (*Bangkok Post*, 8 September 2013). So, many accused persons in security cases in the southern border provinces had to be in custody and lose their freedom during the trials for around 5 years until the final judgement was made.

[186] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, March 2013.

[187] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, November 2012.

help many Malay-Muslim victims demanding justice. His wife once asked him why more victims of violence did not stand up and fight for themselves. Somchai said it was "fear" (Angkhana 2009: 12). The "fear" they had made them leave the state. Somchai was defending several suspected Malay-Muslims who alleged torture while in custody against treason charges. However, his outstanding role in speaking up for many suspected Malay-Muslims led to his disappearance in 2004, allegedly by some authorities who wanted him to be silent forever.

The problems of the justice system and the high number of dismissals were gradually addressed. The problems of the justice system brought about more cooperation and political participation among justice officers, security officers, civil society organizations, and local people in the conflict areas to improve the justice system in the Deep South. For example, there was agreement between the Ministry of Justice, the SBPAC and the Courts of Justice in attempting to shorten the judicial process of the Court of First Instance to one and a half years (*Thai Post*, 14 May 2013). The development of a community justice center in the three southern provinces, aimed to increase feelings of trust of local people towards the justice system through cooperation between a civil network and the Ministry of Justice

In addition to the effectiveness of the justice system, justice officers had important roles in maintaining and developing the efficiency of the legal process. However, some justice officers, who worked in the conflict and violent areas, could not perform as well as expected. The justice officers who had primary responsibility in prosecution included public prosecutors and judges.

The public prosecutors worked in the middle stage of judicial system between inquiry officials and judges. During the early stage of the re-emegence of violence in the Deep South, public prosecutors who were assigned to work in the Deep South were so young and inexperienced that they were not able to work well under pressure and danger in the conflict

areas (McCargo 2008: 94). Moreover, the criminal and security cases in the three southern border provinces, which were mostly related to insurgency and separatism, were very complicated and challenging cases and needed prosecutors who had strong character and experience in dealing with special security cases. Consequently, instead of issuing prosecution orders in only cases that had sufficient evidence for a conviction, many prosecutors tended to bring most cases to court. The prosecutors were even considered as "the weakest link in the judicial chain" (McCargo 2008: 94), who were incapable of doing their jobs and allowed themselves to fall under political influence beyond their legal ethics.

Subsequently, due to many complaints from academics, human right activists, and many Malay-Muslims on the inferior performance of public prosecutors in the conflict areas, the voices of people were heard and addressed by the Thai government and related agencies. Many training programs for prosecutors were organized to improve the quality of public prosecutors on security cases. The knowledge of Forensic Science was developed and applied in order to investigate cases more accurately. In addition, the Office of the Special Attorney on Criminal Case 2, Region 9 was established in Pattani on 1 October 2013 to take particular care of security cases in the South region, including Trang, Patthalung, Satun, Songkhla, and the three southern border provinces. In the past, the standard of prosecution of security cases in each province sometimes varied. Provincial public prosecutors, who were responsible for the security cases, in each province had different views. After the establishment of the Office of the Special Attorney on Criminal Case 2, Region 9, the prosecutions of security cases improved. All the security cases were prosecuted by specialist prosecutors, who were mature and had experience in prosecutions for at least 8 to 10 years in order to increase the effectiveness of prosecutions (*Deep South Watch*, 15 December 2013).

The latest research on security cases in the southern border provinces of Thailand from 2004 to 2013 illustrated the improvement and effectiveness of the prosecutors on

security cases. In the earlier period between 2004 and 2012, many prosecutors spent around 210.36 days on average before issuing / non-issuing a prosecution order. However, due to developments in the judicial process and the Office of the Attorney General, there was impressive improvement of prosecutors' performances. According to the research, the period of screening security cases of the prosecutors between 1 August 2012 and 31 July 2013 impressively decreased from 210.36 to 20.24 days on average (*Isranews*, 16 August 2014).

After consideration by public prosecutors, the cases were sent to a court to be adjudicated by judges. Although judges in the Deep South were sent from other provinces[188] with different backgrounds and religions, many Malay-Muslims and lawyers who defended the Malay-Muslim suspects had high hopes for the court and believed that the court could bring them justice and freedom (McCargo 2008: 94). A judge was therefore a position that received appreciation and respect. However, working as a judge in the three southern border provinces would not be a desirable destination for many judges, especially after the assassination of a Pattani judge in 2004[189] (*The Nation*, 18 September 2004). Moreover, the risk of working in the midst of conflict areas did not only come from the militants, some claimed that judges could also be threatening by the state officials if their responses did not meet military demands[190].

[188] According to the Royal Thai Government Gazette 2011, judges cannot be assigned to work in their hometown or their spouse's hometown, except the court in Bangkok, Bangkok metropolitan region, and the provinces that the Office of Court of Justice Region 1-9 are located, see Royal Thai Government Gazette 2011, Statute of the Courts of Justice, 128 (part 44A): 24.

[189] A 37-year-old Pattani judge, Rapin Ruangkeow, was murdered in September 2004, the first high-ranking official suspected of having been killed by the insurgents since the re-emergence of the insurgency in the early 2004. Rapin was from Chiangmai and worked as a provincial court judge in Narathiwat for 4 years and in Yala for a year, before assuming his post in Pattani in 2003. Justice Minister Phongthep Thepkanchana assumed that his death was possibly related to his role as a judge in the three southern provinces (*The Nation*, 18 September 2004).

[190] A bomb exploded in front of the Yala chief justice's house in 2005 and some claimed that the bombing occurred because the judge refused to sign an arrest warrant. For more details, see Duncan McCargo 2008, *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Ithaca, Ny, USA: Cornell University Press), p. 91.

Similar to other state authorities who worked in the southern border provinces, judges were given some incentives for working in the conflict areas. Besides the special money that they received[191], after one year of working in the conflict areas of the three southern provinces, the judges get privileges in choosing which province they prefer for their next assignment[192]. However, most of the judges who work in the conflict areas were quite young and inexperienced, many of them were newly graduated in their twenties or early thirties (McCargo 2008: 94). There are concerns that the inexperienced judges in the three southern border provinces might not be able to manage a very serious security case properly and expeditiously. An additional concern was mentioned by a civil society activist and journalist in Pattani,

> "Prosecution in the Deep South, especially on security cases, needs to be done very carefully. The judgement will set the standard for future cases. I am worried that the judgment of an inexperienced judge might create the wrong standard, which will affect the prosecution of security cases in the conflict areas. The justice process is very important in solving the conflict and violence. If the standard is wrongly set, it will cause a big problem to all parties concerned[193].

Concerns on this issue were addressed by the Courts of Justice in assigning a new position, the deputy chief judge, in 2012. The deputy chief judge had to be a senior judge

[191] According to the announcement of the Office of the Judicial Administration Commision (OJAC) on 12 February 2008, judicial service officers who work in the conflict areas of southern Thailand receive special remuneration payment of no more than 2,500 baht per month. For more details, see the OJAC announcement <http://www.ojac.coj.go.th/userfiles/file/v12.pdf>, accessed 11 July 2016.

[192] For more details on criteria of judicial transferring, see the Court of Justice Meeting Report No. 23/2555 on 8 November 2012 <http://e-service.coj.go.th/iprd/Bluenews/55/November%202012/8%20November%202012.pdf>, accessed 11 January 2016.

[193] Interview, a civil society activist and journalist in Pattani, March 2013.

who had experience in the judicial personnel for more than ten years and the deputy chief judge will make a judgment together with the judge in Court of First Instance[194].

Nonetheless, political participation through courts was not always a pleasant story. One famous example was the court's verdict of Somchai Neelapaijit, a Thai-Muslim human rights lawyer who disappeared on 12 March 2004. The Supreme Court rejected Somchai's family's request to be a co-plaintiff in the investigation of his disappearance and released five police officers accused of being connected with the disappearance of Somchai. This undermined the confidence and hope of victims who seek justice against the maltreatment of state officers. It was widely believed that his disappearance was related to his work in helping the suspected Malay-Muslims who had been tortured by police officers to file a complaint regarding the alleged assault (*Bangkok Post*, 29 December 2015 and *Prachatai*, 29 December 2015). The verdict of the Supreme Court not only upset Somchai's family, but also the Malay-Muslims who had been abused by the state officers and sought justice. The Somchai case reaffirmed the belief that the Thai judicial system tends to protect state officials over the rights of victims and their families. To date, despite 90 cases of enforced disappearance between 1980 and 2015[195], there has been no state officer prosecuted for involvement in the enforced disappearances (*Prachatai*, 29 December 2015).

The distrust in the justice system and the disappointment in performances of judicial officers damaged voluntary participation through the state in conflict areas of the Deep South. Moreover, political participation through the justice system was blocked by some difficulties in the justice process, such as pressure from parties to the conflict (either state officials or the militants), the language barrier, time and money used during trials, to the risk of countercharges if they lose their cases. These difficulties in the judicial process resulted in the

[194] Royal Thai Government Gazette 2012, Statute of the Courts of Justice, 129 (part 23A): 54.

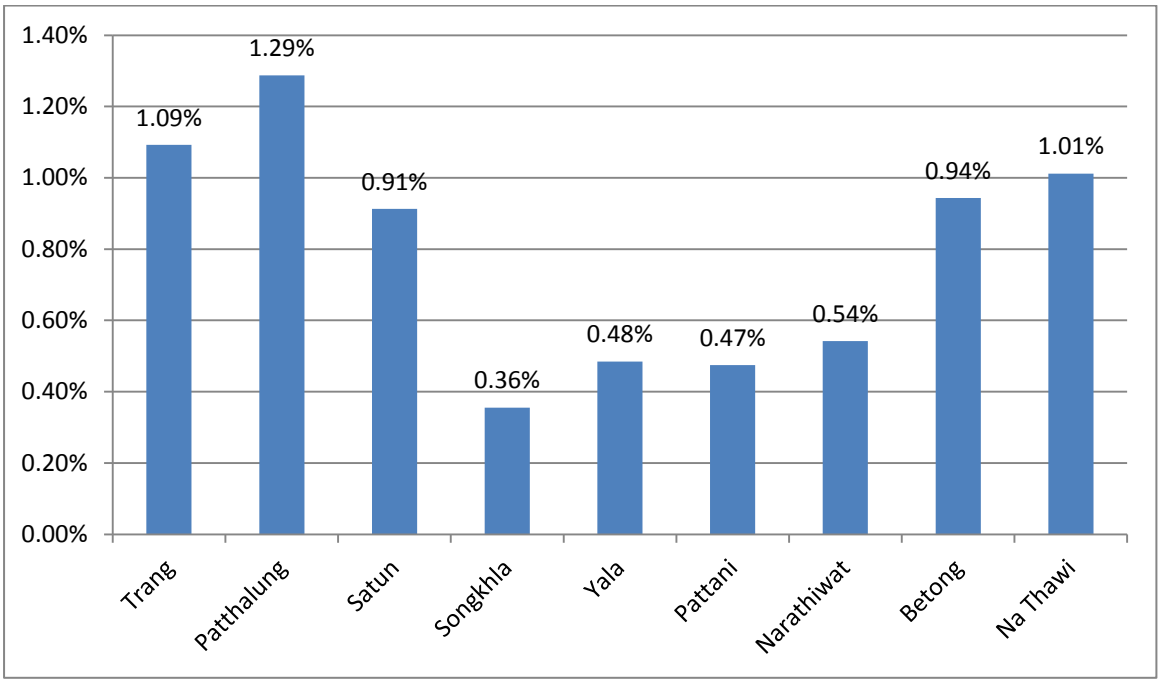
[195] The numbers of enforced disappearance cases were collected from 29 February 1980 to 15 May 2015 by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the United Nations.

low level of political participation through the judiciary. Due to the feeling of distrust and fear, many Malay-Muslims felt insecure to contact judicial officers and chose to avoid any legal commitments, especially when they were mistreated by Thai state officials.

The distrust of the justice system of Thailand not only alienated local people from contacting contacting the judicial service officers on security cases, but also on civil cases, as shown in

Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2 : Percentage of civil cases received by the Court of First Instance Region 9 in 2015



Remarks: 1. Number of civil cases included family and inheritance cases that are judged based on Islamic laws.

2. Betong Provincial Court has jurisdiction over Betong district of Yala

3. Na Thawi Provinicial Court has jurisdiction over five districts of Songkhla, including Chana, Thepha, Na Thawi, Saba Yoi, and Sadao.

Source: The number of civil cases is from Annual Judicial Statistic 2015, Courts of Justice, Thailand.

The number of population is from Official Statistics Registration Systems, Department of Provincial Administration, Thailand.

Figure 5-2 showed a lower number of civil cases received by the Court of First Instance in the conflict areas of the three provinces, including Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, than in non violence conflict areas of the other southern provinces in the Region 9 (Trang, Phatthalung, and Satun, except Songkhla). There were 1.09%, 1.29%, and 0.91% of people in Trang, Phatthalung, and Satun, respectively who brought civil cases to the Court of Justice, whereas there were only 0.48%, 0.47%, and 0.54% of people in the conflict areas of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, respectively, contacting justice officers to file a civil action. Interestingly, the number of civil cases in the low violence conflict areas of Betong district of Yala[196], and the 5 districts of Songkhla (Chana, Thepha, Na Thawi, Saba Yoi, and Sadao) that are under the jurisdiction of the Na Thawi and Betong Provincial Courts was quite high. There were around 1% (0.94% in Betong and 1.01% in Na Thawi) of people in low violence conflict areas of Betong and five districts of Songkhla who brought civil cases to the Court of Justice, which was 50% higher than the number of civil cases the Court of Justice received in the high violence conflict areas of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat.

Although the reasons for the low number of civil cases brought to the courts could be complex and no precise explanation can be confirmed, one possible contention that could be interpreted from the statistical data was that conflict did matter in the level of political participation through justice system. The negative experiences from involuntary participation of people in high violence conflict areas perhaps created barriers and pushed people away from voluntary participation, whereas in the low violence conflict areas, based on conversations with people in low violence conflict areas of Songkhla, people had better relationship with state authorities[197].The lower barriers from fear in the low violence conflict

[196] Betong district of Yala province had only 144 violent incidents between 2004 and 2014 (5th lowest) (Nurseeta et.al. 2014: 41).

[197] Interview, university students in Songkhla, September 2012.

areas positively affected political participation. Local people in low violence conflict areas were likely to have more confidence in contacting state authorities.

Despite the fact that the judicial process should be equally provided as a fundamental right to every citizen, for the Malay-Muslims who live in the midst of conflict and violence under the three special security laws, the attainment of this right was harder and more dangerous than for people in other parts of the country. So, political participation through the state in the matter of justice was low since people rather tended to avoid involving themselves in any legal proceedings. Nevertheless, for many Malay-Muslims who were charged and accused of involving with the insurgency, they had no choice but to be involved with the Thai justice system unavoidably. However, the chance to get justice seemed to be more difficult for them. The negative experiences of involuntary participation hindered local people from having voluntary participation with state authorities. Some local people might be so afraid of the security and justice officers that they did not go to them when they faced problems. Some might take care of the conflict on their own; some decided not to press charges; and some of them then chose to contact local government officials instead.

Local government officials

Studying political participation through the state cannot be completed without a focus on local officials whose responsibilities are considered as a bridge between the central government and the locals. The performance of local officials plays an important role in defining the pattern and level of political participation and portraying the image of the Thai state. In general, people participated with local government officials in many occasions. For people in the conflict areas, interacting with local government officials can be in forms of voluntary participation such as participating in community meetings, contacting local officials for economic issues, and public hearings. In some cases, people are obliged by legal

regulations to contact involuntarily with local officials, such as to apply for a license. However, the form of relationship and participation between local people and local authorities was different at each level of state authorities. The local authoritiess in Thailand range from the provincial governors, district chief officers (*Nai Amphur*), subdistrict headman (*Kamnan*), to village headman (*Phuyaiban*). However, the form of relationship and participation between local people and local authorities was different at each level of state so this section categorized local authorities into two groups based on method of recruitment or acquisition of positions. The first group is the national civil service assigned as local bureaucrats, which are for example provincial governors and *Nai Amphur*. The second group is the elected-native local officials, which are *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban*.

The national civil service officers assigned as local bureaucrats

This section discussed roles and the relationship between local people and the local bureaucrats who are not originally from the Malay-Muslim majority provinces but assigned by the central government to work in the area. Even though they are considered as "civil servants" who work for a Thai government, they also have major responsibility in taking care of locals' happiness. In the past, the relationship between them was difficult mostly because of language and cultural barriers. An elderly Malay-Muslim from Pattani shared his experience when he was young that local Malay-Muslims were always afraid of contacting local bureaucrats.

> I once attended a seminar in one of the northeastern provinces and a local person raised his hand and asked the local bureaucrat if it is possible to bring sticky rice for lunch. The local bureaucrat answered "why not? This is your home." I was so impressed because this kind of conversation hardly happened in my hometown. Local people in the Deep South would

> definitely not dare to question the local bureaucrat and if they did, they might be scolded[198].

So, most Thai-Buddhist government officials who spoke a different language and had different culture and religion had little direct contact with local people and vice versa (McCargo 2008: 57). Besides, the sporadic unrest before 2004 gradually increased the negative attitudes to each other. The communication between the local Malay-Muslims and state officials therefore occurred only for important or necessary matters and through middle men who could speak Thai (Surin 1982: 23). Political participation then was mainly involuntary, such as contacting a district office to get a license or I.D. card. The low level of communication and interpersoncal relationships led to low levels of voluntary participation through the state even before 2004.

By 2004 most Malay-Muslims can speak Thai due to the development of education, technology, and transportation systems in Thailand. Language barriers became less important in political participation between the locals and state officials. However, a new obstacle has arisen which is the re-emergence of conflict and violence since 2004. The recent conflict and violence in the Deep South made the improvement of the relationship between the Malay-Muslims and local bureaucrats more difficult. Generally, the openings for unelected local bureaucrats are limited. The competition is high and difficult. For many applicants, the three southern border provinces might be one of the least wanted destinations due to their distance and danger. The Thai government has policies to promote the positions in the Far South by providing some incentives and special criteria of recruitment. For example, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) holds a separate test for *Palad Amphur* who want to post in the Deep South where the competition is less. The experience of working in the three southern provinces could lead to quicker promotion of the local bureaucrats because the MOI provides privileges

[198] Interview, a scholar in Pattani, April 2013.

for local bureaucrats who voluntarily work in the conflict areas of the southern provinces to count their time in government service as double. So, the career path to Governor can be shortened for local bureaucrats who work in the three southern border provinces and four districts of Songkhla.

Table 5-3: Examination criteria for assistant district officer recruitment in 2015

Subject	General Area (marks)	Three southern border provinces area (marks)
General knowledge of government services	50	40
Understanding of the responsibilities of Department of Provincial Administration	100	100
English Language	20	20
Strategic planning and management	30	-
Understanding of Thai-Muslim[199] culture and current situation in the three southern provinces	-	40
Total	200	200

Source: Department of Provincial Administration Announcement for recruiting assistant district officers, assigned a date on 17 February 2015.

Table **5-3** shows the different criteria for the assistant district officers' examination between other areas and the three southern border provinces. The strategic planning and management subject is replaced by the understanding of the Malay-Muslim culture and current situation in the southern border provinces. The different criteria demonstrate the

[199] The Thai government usually refers to the Malay-Muslims in the Deep South as "Thai-Muslims in the three southern border provinces"

increasing awareness of the Thai government of the value in selecting local bureaucrats who should have more understanding of the background of conflict and violence and the Malay-Muslim culture. In the past, most assigned local bureaucrats were outsiders from other regions of the country with little understand of the Malay-Muslim culture and lifestyle. Some of them unwillingly worked here. The upsurge of violence since 2004 led to the realization by the Thai state of the need to improve the provincial administration of the Deep South, especially improvement of human resources, to be more understandable and accessible to local Malay-Muslims. The assigned local bureaucrats, who voluntarily worked in the conflict areas of the Deep South would be able to provide better service and increase trust among local people, which directly resulted in greater participation, both involuntary and voluntary.

The Thai state is now more open for Malay-Muslims to work in provincial governments. The conflict and violence made the Thai state see the advantage of allowing and encouraging more Malay-Muslims to work with the state in order to promote more positive participation between local people and assigned local bureaucrats. The Malay-Muslims were increasingly acceptable to work with the Thai government and they were treated more equally[200]. When people had positive experiences from involuntary participation, the promotion of voluntary participation with state bureaucrats would be, at least, less difficult.

Although the positions were more open for Malay-Muslims to work for their community, some Malay-Muslim bureaucrats had problems in gaining trust from their fellow Malay-Muslims. They were seen by the locals as untrustworthy for taking the Thai state side. So, political participation during the conflict and violence, sometimes, caused more problems. For the Malay-Muslims bureaucrats, who wanted to participate with the Thai state

[200] Interview, a local bureaucrat in Songkhla, September 2012.

by working as state authorities, they were at risk of being separated from the Malay-Muslim community (McCargo 2008: 59-60). On the contrary, for local Malay-Muslims who wanted to participate through contacting state bureaucrats, they were at risk of being neglected or treated improperly by Thai state officials.

Provincial governor is one of the most important positions and is the most powerful local bureaucrat in a province. After the rise of conflict and violence in 2004, the Department of Provincial Administration tends to select a senior bureaucrat who has relavant background in the southern area to be a governor. For example, the first Malay-Muslim provincial governor, Teera Mintrasak, was assigned in 2006 to be the provincial governor of Yala (*Isranews*, 19 December 2011).

The political leadership of a provincial governor has been an important factor that determined the rise and fall of political participation. Krissada Boonrach, a former governor of Songkhla (2011-2014) and later a permanent secretary of the Ministry of Interior, initiated policies that encouraged political participation within local communities of the four conflict districts of Songkhla. He allowed each village to set up its own rules and regulations in, for example taking care of village security, preventing young villagers from drug addiction, and managing village orderliness. The village regulations were defined by consultation among the four mainstays of community leaders (*Phu nam see sao lak*) in a village, including Phuyaiban, Imam, SAO president, and respected elders of a village[201]. His policy led to cooperation and participation among local government officers, religious leaders, local politicians, and villagers in communities. When the doors to civil power and political rights were more open, it encouraged a significant rise in political participation. Within the first four months after promoting participation within local communities, Krissada said, there were more than 15 subdistricts from the total of 32 subdistricts of the four violent conflict districts

[201] Interview, Krissada Boonrach, 21 February 2013.

of Songkhla, who participated and followed his policies. Villagers managed to have volunteers keeping watch in their villages and at government buildings at night and set their own rules and regulations. Moreover, he noticed that a higher number of local people in these four districts participated with the state's activities, such as in community development projects[202].

Krissada had previously applied his strategy of encouraging participation among the four pillars of community leaders in Yala, when he was a Yala Governor in 2010, but his strategy failed in Yala. Krissada mentioned that there were high suspicions and conflict among the community leaders in Yala (INN News, 6 October 2010). The same strategy that was unsuccessful in high violence conflict areas could be a success in a low violence conflict area where the degree of political participation was more open and feelings of suspicion and untrustworthiness were lower.

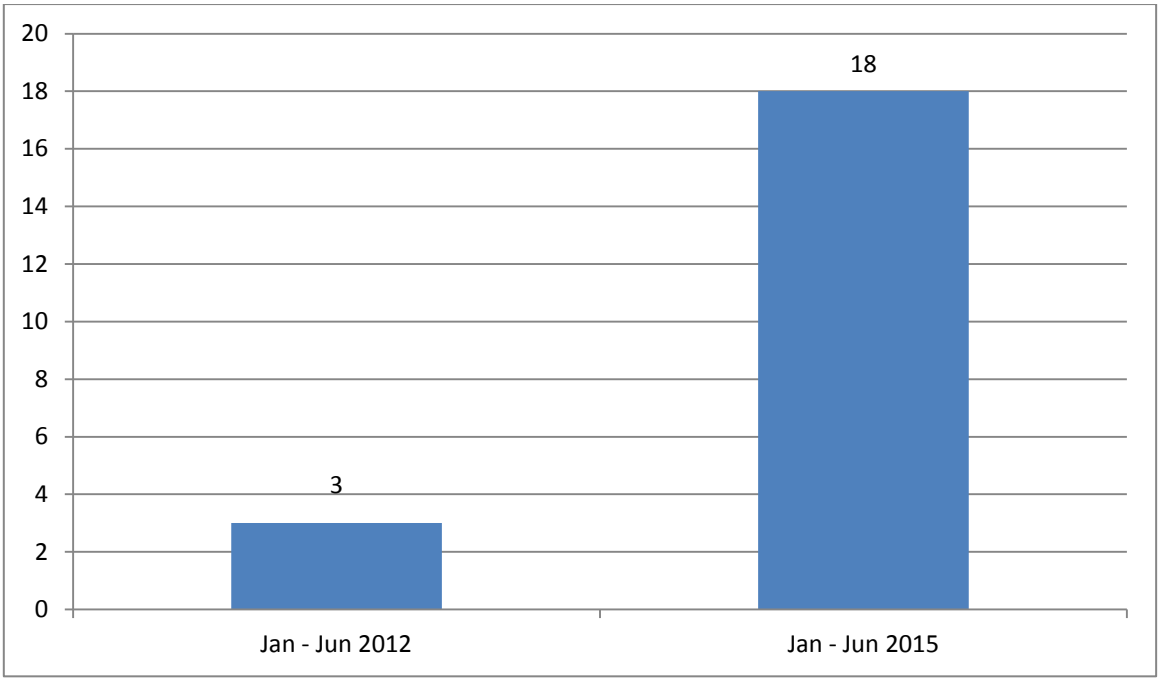
On the contrary, a subsequent governor of Songkhla provided a less open atmosphere for political participation. This aroused resentment in many villagers who believed in political participation, and villagers believed the limitation of channels of political participation under this governor seemingly led to more conflict in the area[203]. As shown in

Figure **5-3**, comparing January – June 2012 (during the period of Krissada) and January – June 2015 (during the period of a subsequent governor), the violent incidents in Songkhla increased from 3 incidents in the first six months of 2012 to 18 incidents in the first six months of 2015.

Figure 5-3: Numbers of violent incidents in Songkhla

[202] Ibid.

[203] Interview, university students from Songkhla, November 2015.



Source: Deep South Incident Database (DSID), Deep South Watch

One of the examples where the subsequent governor impeded access to participation was when he prohibited a group of villagers in Thepha and neighboring districts who disagreed with the foundation of the coal-fired power plant and coal pier in Songkhla's Thepha district to participate in a public hearing on the construction of the coal-fired power plant on 27 July 2015 (*Naewna*, 28 July 2015). His prohibition of participation led to a rally by anti-coal protestors outside the public hearing in Thepha (*Bangkok Post*, 22 August 2015). He then was faced with around 500 protestors in Songkhla who sought to remove him from his post. Some villagers who participated in this protest mentioned that the governor oppressed his people and hindered them from political participation (*Manager* 31 August 2015).

However, despite the increasing intention to promote local people to work for the Thai state, the negative perception of the effectiveness of local bureaucrats pushed the younger generation away from working with the Thai government. As one interviewee from the Deep South who his father worked as a local bureaucrat revealed,

> I once dreamed of working as a local bureaucrat like my father, so I decided to study Political Science. I realized just recently that I do not want to be a bureaucrat anymore because the local bureaucrats have to follow the state's policies from the central government in Bangkok. Even though the local bureaucrats know and understand better about the problem in the conflict areas, they can do nothing much. They have to follow the state orders[204].

The distance between the locals, especially the grassroots in rural areas, and upper level bureaucrats obstructed some Malay-Muslims from formal participation, such as participating in public hearings. If local people, especially at the grassroots, wanted to contact state officials, they tended not to participate by themselves but they preferred to come with their Kamnan/Phuyaiban, who they know well. A local authority, who worked in Yala, said

> When I was posted in one of the rural districts of Yala a few years ago, most villagers came with their Phuyaiban when they wanted to contact Thai state officials at the provincial hall. Unlike Yala, most villagers in Songkhla are not afraid of us (state authorities) so they usually come without a middle man[205].

The assigned local bureaucrats might be in a difficult position in promoting voluntary participation. While some local people refused to contact national civil servants assigned as local bureaucrats, the study found that the relationship between villagers and elected state officials (Kamnan/Phuyaiban) was quite close and more effective.

The elected-native local officials

[204] Interview, a university student in Pattani, February 2013.

[205] Interview, a local authority in Songkhla, March 2013.

There are some positions in the local state, such as *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban*, are locals, elected their position by the villagers. Since the promulgation of the Local Government Act in 1914 *Phuyaiban* have been elected by villagers[206]. The candidate can be either male or female but have to be in the village for not less than two years. After being elected, *Phuyaiban* can be in the position until he/she is 60 years old. A *Kamnan* is elected from *Phuyaiban* by *Phuyaiban* in a subdistrict (*Tambon*) and can also be in the position until the age of 60.

These positions have conflicting roles. Although both *kamnan* and *phuyaiban* are recognized as influential positions, as C.D. Neher (1979: 195) noted many years ago, they have to engage in a "dizzying array of functions". On the one hand, kamnan and phuyaiban act as local representatives. They are responsible for, for example, promoting peace and harmony in a community, managing public utilities, and presenting locals' demands to the government. On the other hand, *kamnan* and *phuyaiban* act as representatives of the Thai state. They have major roles in activities such as distributing government policies to local people, enforcing laws and reporting illegal acts to state authorities, and regularly attending meetings with local bureaucrats and officials (Neher 1979: 195-196).

Since *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban* are locals, who mostly have language ability in both Thai and Malay and are familiar with Thai government officials, they are often requested by their villagers to contact Thai local bureaucrats for them. In addition, due to the sour relationship with the national civil servants, some villagers did not go directly to the district office, they tended to contact *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban* instead. So, local officials are considered as both local and state representatives who act as intermediaries and link the two sides. However, the work of elected- native local officials can be seen as creating the same dilemma where they cannot gain full trust from either the state or the local people. As they

[206] For more details, see Karn pok krong thong tee [Local government], Public Administration Bureau, <http://pab.dopa.go.th/mmenu1.html>, accessed on 31 January 2016.

are Malay-Muslims, the Thai government sometimes feels suspicious of *kamnan* and *phuyaiban* that they would cooperate with the militants to oppose the Thai government, while the local Malay-Muslims suspected that the kamnan and phuyaiban are the eyes and ears for the Thai state. One interviewee, who his father worked as a local official, said,

> During the conflict, it was more difficult for phuyaiban to ask for cooperation from villagers. Some villagers are afraid of being killed if they worked for or helped local officials. I remember an assistant phuyaiban was shot just because he was a little involved in some political matters. So, most villagers preferred to protect themselves from any harm and did not want to take any risk[207]

This student believed voluntary participation through the state did not involve ordinary people rather it involved those who are already influential and powerful, who have their own bodyguard, and who do not have to worry about living expenses, such as the MPs. The locals could only live their lives day by day without being involved in political activities, especially those relating to the ongoing violence[208].

However, the re-emergence of violence did not totally destroy all the confidence in political participation of some villagers. People in the conflict areas, although they avoided discussing the ongoing conflict, still cooperated and participated in other matters, such as community development and volunteering. According to the interviews, the ongoing conflict and violence was not their only concern, many villagers were worry about, for example, livelihoods, income and agricultural products, as well as the problem of drug addiction[209]. It is undeniable that the conflict and violence brought hardship to people in the conflict areas but in another way the conflict and violence also acted as potential motivation for political

[207] Interview, a university student in Songkhla, September 2012.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Field notes, Songkhla and Pattani, November 2012 and February – March 2013.

participation. Local people increasingly realized the importance of communal participation in reinforcing their community. Many interviewees said political participation in smaller entities, such as in the village, was quite high. An interviewee from a small village of Pattani told that Phuyaiban of his village played an important role in organizing public participation. He arranged weekly (or sometimes monthly) village meetings and almost everyone in his village regularly participated in the meetings, sharing opinions about how to make the most of the village fund, and volunteering to look after their village at night[210]. Such voluntary participation can be successfully arranged through the leaders that villagers trusted and elected.

Desperation also could not stop political participation. Even though most people in the conflict areas did not want to discuss the ongoing conflict and violence with each other as it is too dangerous and a sensitive topic, most villagers were likely to discuss and participate with their elected-native local bureaucrats in other matters. Based on my conversations during my field research, many local people in the conflict areas, especially in rural villages, thought of *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban* as the first person to contact when they faced a problem[211]. As some interviewees expressed;

> My family preferred to ask for help from kamnan and phuyaiban rather than other state authorities. Kamnan and phuyaiban had many important roles in my village and often visited my family. They, then, are in a close, familiar relationship[212].

> The first person I contact when I have trouble is the phuyaiban. I can call and he always answers most calls from his villagers. We (his family) are much closed to our phuyaiban.[213]

[210] Interview, university students in Songkhla, September 2012.

[211] Field note, Songkhla and Pattani, November 2012, February and March 2013.

[212] Interview, a university student in Songhla, November 2012.

[213] Interview, a university student in Pattani, Februart 2013.

Thus, most people gave importance to local elections of *Phuyaiban* as much as national elections, or even more. However, despite being local officials, who correspond with the Thai state, the candidates might be either supporters of the Thai state or dissenters against the state; some candidates might represent traditional elites; some might be canvassers of a politician, and some might answer to a state authority. Voters could vote to support a candidate in accordance with their personal attitudes and preferences. Some villagers, who might not agree with the state's policies, still wanted to participate to select a head of village who they believed might have similar attitudes but still had to be able to help them in contacting the Thai state. The local election of *phuyaiban* always was the most popular election where almost everyone participated vigorously[214].

For people in the remote areas, it was not often that their elected MPs came to visit them. The distantness caused the feeling of being ignored so they relied more on the elected local officials, who were villagers and always with them. "the MP did not come to my village, except during his campaign, but *kamnan/phuyaiban* is always there. He is the closet person to all villagers. When villagers have problems, they always came to *Kamnan* or *Phuyaiban*[215]."

Local officials, who work as intermediaries for the interests of the country and happiness of the locals, are then the important actors who could either destroy or strengthen voluntary participation of people in the conflict areas. Also, the performance of local officials impacted greatly on the people's decisions to contact the Thai state. However, the relationship between local officials, especially the assigned bureaucrats, seemed to be quite estranged and the contact between them seemed to be limited because of different background and the feeling of distrust. Compared to the assigned bureaucrats, the elected-

[214] Interview, a local official in Songkhla, September 2012.

[215] Interview, a university student in Thepha, February 2013.

native local officials and the Malay-Muslims are in a better and closer relationship. The relationship with national civil servants assigned as local bureaucrats might be sour but at the same time it indirectly strengthened the relationship between the elected local officials and the grassroots, especially in rural conflict areas where participation gets stymied.

Drawing Contrast: a direct comparison of conflict and non-conflict areas

Political participation through the state depended largely on the dynamic relationship between state officials and local people. Whereas the ongoing conflict and violence inspired many Malay-Muslims to participate through elections, the distrust in state officials during the conflict and violence alienated some Malay-Muslims from contacting the state. There are no records keeping track of people contacting the state but from interviews, we can compare different areas in terms of political participation. This section therefore examined political participation, both involuntary and voluntary, through the state in different areas that had different levels of conflict and violence in order to examine if the influence of conflict and violence caused differences in political participation through the state.

In terms of involuntary participation, in non violence areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra, political participation through the state is quite straightforward. Since villagers are Thai-Buddhists, barriers in contacting the state are fewer than for Malay-Muslim villagers. Involuntary participation, such as contacting district officers to get a license, and taking part in a trial, runs more smoothly without worrying about threat from violent incidents and fear of state authorities. Villagers did not have negative experiences from forced participation, especially by security officers, because the areas are not under special control of the military. Consequently, the perceptions of security officials and their roles in the conflict areas are

quite positive, especially when compared to people in conflict areas. While most people in the conflict areas fought against the hawkish strategy of the military in the Deep South, some participants from the non violence conflict areas in Ranot and Sathing Phra supported the harsh method and opposed the dove strategy. As a participant from Sathing Phra said:

> I do not agree and do not understand why the government has policies to remedy southern bandits (*Chon tai*). They kill people, they, then, should be killed or at least arrested, rather than offer them an option of assist[216].

Moreover, since most people in non-violence conflict areas did not have negative perceptions of state authorities, trust was developed in state institutions, and not focused on individual officials. So, they contacted and trusted representative of the state, not because of being impressed with some officials. One local authority, newly posted in Ranot, said that he received a warm welcome on the first day of his post and villagers came to talk to him about their problems the same as they did with the former official[217].

One local authority who had work experiences in both conflict and non conflict areas in southern Thailand explained one of the differences in contacting state agencies of people in non conflict and conflict areas was that when Malay-Muslims who lived in the conflict areas came to a district office to contact state authorities, they usually came with *Kamnan*, *Phuyaiban*, or their religious leaders. They were afraid of contacting Thai local bureaucrats by themselves. On the contrary, many villagers in non conflict areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra could participate through the state without fear. They usually came to make contact with state agencies by themselves without taking community leaders with them[218].

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[216] Interview, a university student from Sathing Phra, February 2013.

[217] Interview, a local authority in Ranot, February 2013.

[218] Ibid.

For villagers in low violence conflict areas of Chana and Thepha, involuntary participation through contacting the state sometimes was not as smooth as in the non violence areas. There were cases where Malay-Muslims in Chana and Thepha felt that they did not receive proper treatment from state officials, especially security officers. As some interviewees from Chana and Thepha pointed out:

> I am very concerned about the problem of discrimination and inequality between the Buddhists and Muslims. I notice that when we go through the security check point, the military check more seriously, and sometimes aggressively, on Muslims, but let the Buddhists go easily. I think we should not be subjected to discrimination.[219]

> I feel that some villages are given particular attention by the Thai state and they (villagers) are suspected as separatists. I am afraid that if the Thai state keep watching and treating them as suspected separatists, they will turn against the Thai state and became real separatists some day[220].

> The Thai government always says that people do not understand the Thai state or do not understand what they (state officials) are doing. But in turn, I am not sure if the Thai state understands its people. The government should understand us before asking us to understand them[221].

However, compared to the high violence conflict areas, many villagers in Chana and Thepha districts could communicate with security officers with more confidence and a positive attitude. While people in the high violence conflict areas might avoid participating

[219] Interview, a university student from Chana, November 2012.

[220] Interview, a university student from Thepha, November 2012.

[221] Interview, a university student from Chana, November 2012.

with the military, people in the low violence conflict areas demonstrated better interactions between the military and local people. As shown in interviews,

> I have a good relationship with the military. We work together in developing my community such as participating in disaster prevention programs[222].

> My village has a good relationship with the military, I preferred local soldiers though. Some soldiers come from other regions and do not understand Muslim culture. If the government sent local soldiers, at least from the southern provinces, not from E-san (northeastern region) or Northern provinces, the military would have more understanding and can prevent more conflict in the areas[223].

Involuntary participation through the state in the high violence area of Mueang Pattani was full of difficulty and suspicion. The state officials had to try hard to gain trust from the Malay-Muslims, which proved even harder in more rural areas. Especially the relationship between the military and local people was uneven in that the military has superior power.

The level and pattern of political participation through the state in Mueang Pattani was also significantly different between villagers in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the majority of the population could speak Thai and were generally well-educated because the area was a location of Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus. Moreover, there were many Thai-Buddhists in urban areas of Mueang Pattani. So, the majority of people in urban areas had more political skills and lower language barriers in contacting the state than people living in rural areas of Mueang Pattani. However, political participation through the state in urban areas of Mueang Pattani was very much impeded by the ongoing conflict and violence.

[222] Interview, a university student from Thepha, September 2012.

[223] Interview, a university student from Thepha, September 2012.

A high frequency of violent conflict incidents occurred and mostly targeted state authorities, making many locals hesitate to contact state agencies to avoid the risk of being endangered by association. During my time in Pattani, there were many times that I was told and noticed that some local people avoided being around state officials, especially the military. For example, they tended not to park their cars near military vehicles or they preferred not to enter into a restaurant where they saw military officers eating[224].

Political participation through the state in rural areas was worse. Due to the feeling of untrustworthiness, local people were very careful in having a relationship with state authorities. Being a Muslim state official sometimes was not enough to guarantee a warm welcome from many Malay-Muslim villagers in rural areas of Mueang Pattani. One local government authority, who was a Muslim from another region and was appointed to work in one of the smallest subdistricts of Mueang Pattani, expressed that he experienced a difficult time during his first few years of working in this area. However, after he attempted to learn to speak Melayu, the native language of villagers, and regularly participated in Islamic activities and attended prayer service at mosque every week, he was able to gain more trust from many villagers and they were more willing to communicate and participate with him[225]. It was not only state officials that kept an eye on local people, both state authorities and local people kept watching and observing each other. They waited until they were certain of the state officials before participating. In the high violence conflict area, political participation through the state, when it did occur became personalized due to distrust of the state and its authorities.

The different experiences in involuntary participation resulted in different levels of voluntary participation. In non violence areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra, although the risk of participation is lower than in the conflict areas, incentives to participate in public activities

[224] Interview and personal observation during field research in Pattani, September 2012 and February 2013.

[225] Interview, a local government officer in Pattani, 27 February 2013.

are not strong enough to create motivation to participate voluntarily, unless the issue has a direct affect on participants. A university student from Sathing Phra raised the example of voluntary participation in her village that

> I felt that my village was ignored by the Bangkok government. It may be because we are not facing serious problems compared to other areas, such as in the Deep South. So, it always took a long time for the government to solve our problems. We (villagers), mostly, managed the village problems on our own by contacting local politicians and officials and we solved the problems together[226].

Based on field research, local authorities in Ranot and Sathing Phra pointed out that political awareness and participation of Ranot and Sathing Phra villagers generally increased when they faced problems relevant to their personal interests and occupation, such as the problem of traditional fisheries, water resources, and land conflict. They then participate voluntarily and actively to retain their resources. When the problem is solved, political participation regularly decreased or was discontinued.

Political participation in Chana and Thepha districts was directly affected by the conflict and violence in the Deep South. Although the ongoing conflict and violence in Chana and Thepha occurred less frequently than in the three high conflict provinces, it greatly motivated many villagers in Chana and Thepha to participate voluntarily to protect their communities from more violence. In addition, although Chana and Thepha districts were under the special security law of the Internal Security Act, the provisions on political rights were more permissive than those applied in high violence conflict areas of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. As a result, channels of political participation through the state in Chana and Thepha were more open and supported by both central and local governments. There were

[226] Interview, a university student from Sathing Phra, Novembr 2012.

meetings of *Kamnan* and *Phuyaiban* every month. Then *Phuyaiban* had to call for meetings of village committees within 7 days and report back to the chief district officer. Moreover, each district office regularly sent the assistant district officers and their teams to visit local people and participate in village meetings[227]. A university student from Thepha said that he often participated in the village meetings together with *kamnan, phuyaiban,* and other local officials[228]. "I not only listened to what the adults said, but I also spoke out in the meetings. Although the officials in the meetings might not agree with my opinions, they, at least, listened and allowed me to speak for the younger generation in the village", said a university student from Thepha[229].

When local communities received support from the state, they could participate freely without fear of becoming suspects. So, with the motivation to protect their communities from violence, and the support from powerful state actors, voluntary participation in low violence conflict area of Chana and Thepha districts was quite high. A local government official in Thepha explained that "most local people kept an eye on their community. They were not afraid and had no hesitation to contact us (state agencies) when they noticed something suspicious. Our community was strong because local people actively participated for the good of their village[230]." Similarly, a local official in Chana also had the same experience. As he said,

[227] Interview, a local authoirity in Thepha, February 2013.

[228] Interview, a university student from Thepha, September 2012.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Interview, a local authoirity in Thepha, February 2013.

> Since they (villagers) trusted us (local officials), my villagers showed great interest to participate and cooperate with us, especially in watching over their communities and informing us when noticing something unusual or spotting someone speaking Malay[231]".

Voluntary participation in Chana and Thepha was then seen as so effective that government officials believed it led to a decrease of violent incidents[232]. Due to a decrease in violence, Chana was one of the two districts where the military decided to return security duties to provincial authorities in January 2013.

Some people accepted that the Thai state provided many channels for participation but there still were many people who did not know how to participate or access those channels[233]. The problem in Chana and Thepha is not people that tended to avoid participating, they wanted to participate but sometimes their knowledge and experience of politics was limited so they did not know how to participate effectively.

In contrast, voluntary participation through the state for people in the high violence conflict areas of Mueang Pattani was problematic. Many local people in the Deep South did not trust he state or state authorities and that prevented them from helping and participating with the Thai state. Discussions about violent incidents were also avoided in the high violence conflict areas. Many local Malay-Muslims tended not to talk about the ongoing conflict and violence because they were afraid that it would bring them more harm and suspicion from either the state or the militants. Similarly, local officials were likely not to criticize or discuss violent incidents that happened in communities as they were sensitive

[231] Interview, a local authoirity in Chana, November 2012. Many Malay-Muslims in Chana and Thepha speak southern Thai language, whereas many Malay-Muslims in the three southern border provinces and militants speak Malay. When strangers entered Chana district, especially a stranger who speaks Malay, Chana villagers would take utmost caution with them and inform state authorities to investigate or ask them to move out.

[232] Interview, a local authority in Thepha, February 2013.

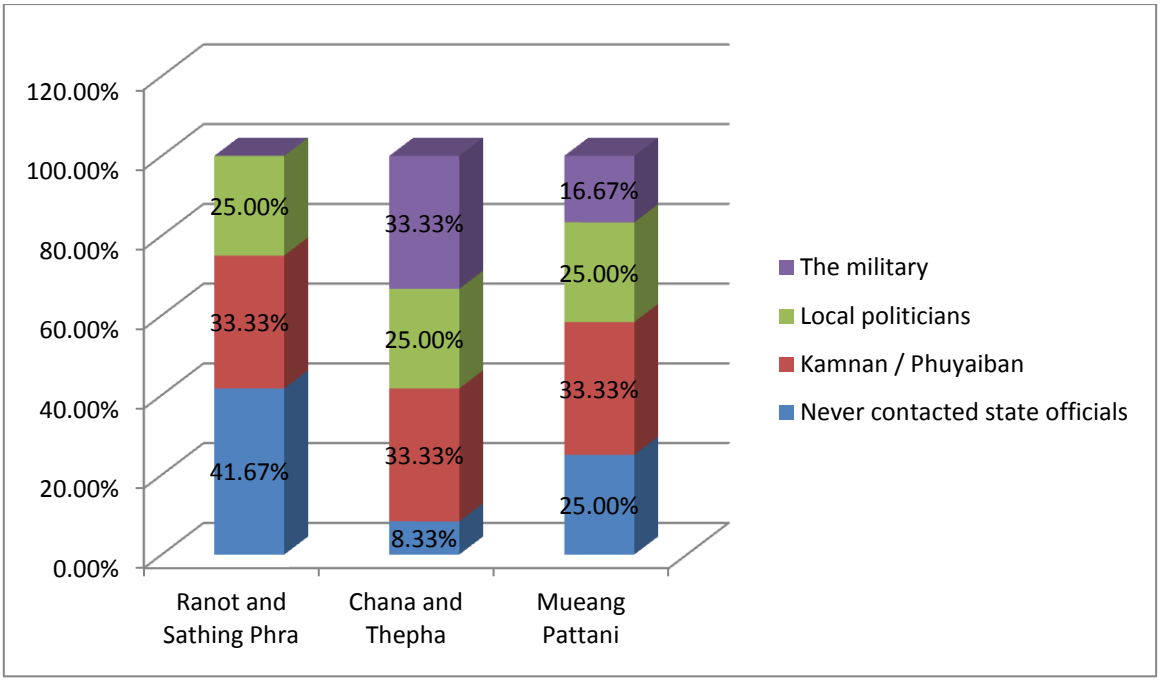
[233] Interview, a university student in Chana, September 2012.

issues that could easily lead to misunderstanding and more conflict in villages. So, political participation relevant to security issues were avoided and, as a local official in rural areas of Mueang Pattani mentioned, it would be difficult to get many villagers to participate except if the activities involved livelihood and social problems. The local official explained that for his village, "If it was about the security problem, we (villagers) did not talk. If it was about something else such as drug problems and subsistence, we brainstormed and argued to develop our village[234]." He further explained that "although they experienced violent incidents, people here did not run away from Thai politics. They participated in elections. The ones that they wanted to run away from were the Thai state officials. The ongoing conflict and violence did not make them feel bored with politics, but it increased the feeling of distrust in state authorities.[235]" Although some parts of the state are trusted a bit more than others, like the judiciary or SBPAC, political participation through the state in high violence conflict areas largely became personalized rather than institutionalized. So, unless the problem of trust was resolved, voluntary participation through the state in the high violence conflict areas would be difficult to revive.

Figure 5-4: Which state authorities did people in the study areas interact with most frequently?

[234] Ibid.

[235] Ibid



Interviews of 36 participants, 12 in each area, revealed interesting results. As shown in

Figure 5-4, the number of participants who never contacted state officials was highest in the non violence conflict areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra districts (41.67%), and lowest in the low violence conflict areas of Chana and Thepha (8.33%), where people had higher incentives from the conflict and violence and less risk from violent incidents and forced participation. In the conflict areas, the security officials came to play a role. However, participants from high violence conflict areas had less interaction with the military (16.67%) than participants from the low violence conflict areas (33%). Participants in the high violence conflict areas preferred to contact *Kamnan / Phuyaiban* (33%) and local politicians (25%) instead.

The level of political participation through the state of people in the conflict areas greatly depended on the level of risk and incentives. Living in the midst of conflict and violence caused higher incentives and higher stakes to solve the violence than those living in

non violence conflict areas. The higher incentives led to higher participation. Another important variable that caused a difference in level and pattern of political participation of people in the conflict areas was the level of risk. The level of risk could arise from, for example, the violent incidents, negative perceptions towards state authorities, and unimpressive experiences from forced participation. These risks significantly undermined political participation through the state. So, the three study areas, which had different levels of conflict and violence, then had different levels and patterns of political participation through the state. In non violence conflict areas, although they had lower risks, most people had less incentives than those in conflict areas. They tended to participate voluntarily through contacting the state only when they personally faced problems. In moderate conflict violence areas, incentive to participation was high enough to motivate people to overcome the difficulties, and risk in the areas was not too high to undermine people's will to participate. Therefore, the lower barriers and higher incentives supported people in Chana and Thepha to participate. On the contrary, the same incentives that led to high participation of people in the high violence conflict areas were undermined by higher risks. So, people in the high violence conflict areas tended to participate involuntarily only if they were forced.

Conclusion

The undesirable experience of coercive actions and extrajudicial killings by the Thai police and military, the disrespect of the Malay-Muslim culture by some local state bureaucrats, and the problem of injustice due to the limitations of access to the court system and improper judicial process under the special security laws, could easily increase the feeling of distrust of the state authorities overall. In conflict areas, distrust means participation, when it occurs, becomes personalized. It is not with institutions but with trusted members of them. The remoteness and distrust in the Thai state opened a chance for the militants to intervene and draw in more Malay-Muslims to join the insurgency.

The main question that this chapter aimed to answer is what kind of participation through the state should we expect to take place in the areas that are full of conflict and violence, where the relationship between local people and state authorities was undermined for decades. This chapter indicates that political participation through the state in the conflict areas of the Deep South comprised both negative and positive participation. The two types of political participation are not separate but impact each other. Involuntary participation could undermine voluntary participation. On the contrary, if people had positive experiences from involuntary participation, it could reinforce positive participation.

Since some local people did not like the Thai state, "normal" participation rarely happened. The negative experiences from involuntary participation of people in the conflict and violence areas were hard to avoid. Some Malay-Muslims were arrested as suspected separatists and had to participate through the justice system to fight for their freedom. Some might feel oppressed from forced participation and tend to avoid taking part in voluntary participation. However, in some cases the involuntary particapation that blocked some people from political participation could bring about positive participation in the conflict areas.

During the conflict, negative participation can turn to positive participation. Bad experiences from contacting security or justice officers could indirectly inspire more positive participation with the local government officials. Forced participation caused negative experiences towards state authorities. So, people might turn against the Thai state through violent actions. Personal negative experiences discouraged political participation through the state. However, people having problems with the Thai state may tend to participate more through other channels, such as civil society organizations, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 : Political Participation through civil society

In the previous chapter, we discussed political participation through the state and the findings showed that many Malay-Muslims in the Deep South only contacted state officials involuntarily, when they had no choice. The negative experiences from involuntary participation discouraged many Malay-Muslims from voluntary participation with the state and estranged many locals from state officials. Moreover, having a close relationship with state officials could be dangerous because it could lead to being targeted by the separatists. Many Malay-Muslims were, thus, caught in the crossfire between the insurgents and the Thai military. So, they were likely to keep a low profile and avoid interaction with state agencies to avoid getting killed. Unproductive experiences with involuntary participation and the high risk from cooperating with the Thai state resulted in a declining incentive for political participation through the state.

Did the conflict and violence also undermine other channels of political participation? In this chapter we will examine political participation through civil society, an alternative channel of political participation that may circumvent the broken linkage between the locals and the Thai state. As defined in chapter 2, political participation through civil society in this research refers to non-electoral political participation where individuals or groups of people participate in an organization or community activities with an aim to influence government decision making on community policies (Verba, Nie, and Barbic: 1973, and Huntington and Nelson: 1976). Unlike political participation through the state, political participation through civil society is unforced and voluntary. Taking part in civil society is based on individuals' freewill, that is, people make their own choice to participate without being forced or legally obliged

This chapter concerns political participation through civil society of both local people and of the promoters of civil society, including state and non-state actors, as well as their relationships during the conflict situation. By studying both sides of the actors, we will see more clearly that overall political participation through civil society in the conflict areas is developing and expanding, not only in terms of the specific activities, but also in terms of involvement of wider groups of actors.By studying both participation of local citizens and of the promoters of civil society, we will see more clearly that overall political participation through civil society in the conflict areas is developing and expanding, not only in terms of the specific activities, but also in terms of involvement of wider groups of actors.

We will begin by presenting the general development of civil society organizations in the Deep South after the renewed violence in 2004. Then, we will look at how each particular group of actors participated in civil society. The actors are divided, based on interviews with civil society activists, into five categories, including youth, women, the business sector, the religious sector, and the media. In addition, the relationship between civil society and locals, as well as the interaction between the civil society and the Thai state will be discussed. Finally, we will end this chapter by drawing a direct comparison among areas with different levels of violence to find out how much impact the ongoing conflict and violence had on political participation through civil society.

Civil society organizations in conflict areas of the Deep South

Civil society in the Deep South has passed through several stages of development since the re-emergence of violence in 2004. The development of the Deep South's civil society can be divided into three stages: the arrival of expert-led CSOs, the emergence of

local-led CSOs, and the expansion of a civil society network. When the conflict and violence resumed in the Far South in 2004, it frightened people in the Far South at all levels, including civil society activists who worked in the conflict areas. Due to the dangerous situation and violent incidents, many civil society activists had to suspend their activities. Some civil society activists who came from other areas returned home and some local civil society activists faced difficulties to carry out their activities because of safety reasons[236]. Simultaneously, the unexpected expansion of violence created fear and suspicion among local people. So, most of them chose not to take part in civil society activities and had little communication with outsiders and strangers[237]. Therefore, during the very beginning period of the violence, the risk of violent incidents was so high that some civil society activists and local Malay-Muslims had high barriers to participate in civil society organizations.

Since the upsurge of conflict and violence triggered panic, especially among locals, there were rarely CSOs that had a local origin established during this period[238]. The CSOs in the Deep South that functioned during the first few years after the renewed violence were mostly expert-led CSOs. The expert-led CSOs in this study referred to organizations that were led and/or operated by someone with expertise in a specific field and practical knowledge and experience to support civil society activities. Since the increase of violent incidents impeded many political activities in the conflict areas, political participation through civil society during the first few years of the renewed violence were generally started by CSOs based outside the conflict areas, such as in Bangkok. For example, the Local Development Institute (LDI), a Canadian-funded national non-governmental organization

[236] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, November 2012.

[237] Interview, a local bureaucrat in Pattani, November 2013.

[238] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, May 2013.

(NGO) founded in Bangkok in 1991[239], arranged a conference on the violence in the southern border provinces in Bangkok on 7 March 2004, just two months after the gun robbery incident. There were many academics and CSOs in Bangkok who participated and brainstormed in the conference[240]; the Cross Cultural Foundation, a Bangkok based NGOs founded in 2002 by Somchai Homla-or, a renowned Thai human rights defender, expanded its activities to cover the human rights issue in the Deep South from the beginning of the renewed conflict.

There were also expert-led organizations established that were based in the conflict areas of the southern border provinces. The establishment of CSOs in the conflict areas during the beginning period of the renewed violence was mostly initiated by professional civil society activists and academics both in the area and from other regions. For example, Deep South Watch (DSW), a non-profit organization based at the Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, was established in 2006 by a group of academics and professionals in political science, public health, and journalism. The DSW aimed at expanding political space for all actors, rather than the Thai state and the separatists, to express their views through non-violent methods.

The conflict and violence in the Deep South that brought thousands of lives to violent deaths raised concerns not only to people and civil society activists in Thailand, but also to international organizations, such as the World Bank, European Union, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, the Asia Foundation, the Asia Resource Foundation (ARF), Amnesty International, the Nippon Foundation, Oxfam International, and the Sasakawa peace foundation. These international organizations supported many projects in the Deep South in a variety of fields.

[239] For more information on the history of the Local Development Institute, See Pimjai Surintaraseree 2001, "*Local Development Institute/foundation (Thailand),* The Synergos Institute Series on Optimising ODA Funding in Southeast Asia (New York: Synergos Institute).

[240] Interview, a civil society acitivist in Pattani, February 2013.

Funds from international organizations were considered another important financial source for the CSOs working on the Deep South issue. Compared with other regions in the country, the Deep South region received considerably higher financial support from international sources[241]

Support from international organizations came in different forms. Some international organizations only gave financial support to local CSOs to carry out their activities in the conflict areas; some international organizations initiated and operated projects in the Deep South and hired local people to work as local project coordinators for them. For example, the Asian Resource Foundation (ARF), which was established in 1996 and headquartered in Bangkok, opened a branch in Pattani in 2005 and employed a Muslim law graduate, Pattama Hamingma, to work as its project coordinator (*Thai Journalist Association News*, 7 July 2007). The ARF-Pattani runs many programs relating to peace and community development, such as the inter-faith dialogue, the establishment of a community learning center, and a healing program for youth in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat.

The support of the expert-led organizations during the beginning period of the renewed conflict and violence in the Deep South brought knowledge and professional expertise to local people in several fields. The transfer of knowledge and expertise generated, either directly or indirectly, valuable asset for local people to be able to constitute a civil society group of their own. The development brought forward the next stage of the civil society development, that is, the expansion of the local-led CSOs in the Deep South. The local-led CSOs in this study applies to CSOs that originated in the Deep South and/or are led by local people, who may or may not have formal education but are motivated to engage in public activities.

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241 Interview, civil society activists in Pattani, February 2013.

Although some local civil society activists lacked formal education, the capability to form a civil society group and arrange public activities could come from different sources of knowledge. Some local activists gained knowledge from participating in the expert-led civil society activities, as either local activists or receivers. The experiences of voluntary participation in the expert-led organizations strengthened capabilities of local people to carry out public works for their own communities. Some local activists received knowledge and developed their political skills through their own accumulated experiences of involuntary participation, such as participating in the justice system and taking part in government recovery programs for victims of the conflict and violence, as we will see below.

The conflict and violence affected local people in different ways. Some people in conflict areas became passive, seldom expressed themselves and infrequently participated in political activities, whereas some people turned their experiences of conflict and violence to motivation of participation and became active agents of change in the community (Saeed 2016: 168-169). An increase of local-led CSOs established by victims of the conflict and violence in the Deep South demonstrates the latter statement. For example, the Duayjai Group, a human rights organization, was founded by Anchana Heemmina and Pattama Heemmina in Songkhla in 2010. They were local entrepreneurs from Saba Yoi district of Songkhla province and had no interest in human rights problems in the Deep South. After a family member was arrested and detained in a security-related case in 2008, they fought against many difficulties for justice for their family member before the court dismissed his case in 2010 (*Prachatai*, 7 March 2016). With the experience and political skills they had learned from participating in the justice system, they then founded the Duayjai group to provide advice to families of detainees and help them to get through the justice process. Thus the conflict and violence indirectly strengthened the capacities of local people. The conflict

and violence changed victims, easily affected by violent incidents, to strong civil society activists, and turned involuntary participation to voluntary participation. The victims-became-activists transformed the negative experiences of conflict and violence into a motive for participation in civil society.

Consequently, the prolonged conflict and violence in the Deep South indirectly encouraged the growth of local-led organizations in the conflict areas. Civil society organizations run by local Malay-Muslims in the three southern most provinces of Thailand gradually increased and became more important actors in motivating local people to participate in civil society activities[242]. However, local civil society activists could be challenged by the skepticism of both the state and community members. Some local-led CSOs were occasionally viewed by the Thai state as dissident groups that opposed the power of the state[243]. So, some local people might not feel safe to take part in civil society activities because they were afraid of being misunderstood by state authorities. On the contrary, other state-funded local-led CSOs were considered by some community members as a proxy of the Thai state. So, some locals, especially those who had negative perceptions of the Thai state, felt hesitant to participate with the state-funded CSOs[244]. A student activist from Yala said,

> I do not take part with some CSOs. They received big amounts of money from the government to arrange activities, such as conferences and public forums. I do not believe that they are promoting public opinions. I believe their activities were rather for promoting the Thai state policies because they had to follow the Thai state's orders[245].

[242] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, February 2013.

[243] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, November 2012.

[244] Interview, a student activist from Yala, February 2013.

[245] Ibid.

Even though the relationships between Malay-Muslims and civil society could be considered better than the relationships between Malay-Muslims and the Thai state, the feelings of insecurity and the suspicion towards the roles and objectives of civil society impeded some local people in the conflict areas from participating in and cooperating with CSOs.

Moreover, although most public activities of the local-led CSOs were considered by some civil society activists to be more effective when they were more localized to better serve the needs of local people[246], the local-led CSOs in the Deep South were small and dispersed. Some local CSOs preferred to act on their own and they had insufficient cooperation with other organizations[247]. The scattering of CSOs made civil society in the Deep South weak and could limited its ability to create strong collective power of people. However, the issue of a dispersed and ineffective civil society was increasingly recognized by many activists who worked on the ongoing conflict and violence agenda[248]. After the 2010s, a civil society networks gradually emerged and increased. One of the leading and pioneering founders of a civil society network was the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand. The idea to found the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand was initiated by senior civil society activists, both Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims, from Bangkok and the Deep South, who realized the problem of a dispersed and weak civil society in the Deep South. With the agreement of twenty CSOs, the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand was then formed on 21 July 2011 with the aims to, firstly, enhance the capability of civic organizations, secondly, to have a common resolution for the ongoing conflict and violence

[246] Interview, civil society activists in Songkhla and Pattani, November 2012 and March 2013.

[247] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, November 2012.

[248] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, March 2013.

and sustainable development, thirdly, to exchange knowledge and experiences, and lastly, to create more public spaces[249].

However, some local civil society activists perceived the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand as a government-friendly organization, which mean it received support from, among others, the Thai government and might have different perceptions on the conflict in the Deep South from other local CSOs[250]. The Civil Society Network for Peace (Kor Por Sor) was then established in 2013 by Tuwaedaniya Tuwaemaengae, President of a local CSO Lembaga Patani Raya untuk kedamaian dan pembangunan (The Academy of Patani Raya for Peace and Development or Lempar). The Kor Por Sor includes eighteen local CSOs in the Deep South to pursue its goal in promoting local interests and protecting the human rights of Patani people (*Deep South Watch*, 28 February 2016). In addition, the Women's Agenda for Peace (PAW), a network of those CSOs led by female activists, also emerged from an agglomerate of 23 women oriented CSOs in the restive Deep South in 2015 to promote peace through non-violent methods (*Deep South Watch*, 28 April 2016).

CSOs in the Deep South were strengthened and able to engage in the policy-making process more effectively through the expansion of the CSO networks. There was more collaboration among CSOs and they could draw in a wider group of individuals to take part in civil society activities. However, despite the increasing number of civil society networks and CSOs in the Far South, many civil society activists were familiar faces, who worked for several CSOs at the same time[251]. There were concerns that if civil society in the Deep South was led by only a certain limited group of people, mostly middle class, it limited access to grassroots participation, and policies represented by civil society were likely to be opposed

[249] Interview, a committee member of the Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand, May 2013.

[250] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, February 2013.

[251] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013.

by local people, who did not gain access to participate in civil society activities. One university student activist in Pattani who often participated in seminars and conferences on the Deep South problem stated:

> When I attend conferences, seminars, or workshops on the problem of the Deep South, I always see a similar group of people who arrange and attend the events. I frequently participated in civil society activities because I like to learn from professional perspectives. However, I am also curious and concerned if there are only a limited group of participants and activists, how can they have a great impact on our society?[252]

In addition, civil society in the Deep South rarely expanded its network beyond the region. Without the participation and support of people from other regions, who are majority in the country, neither civil society nor the state will be able to develop a smooth path to peace. As one local civil society activist in a conflict area of Songkhla put it,

> It does not matter how hard we (civil society activists) work in our own community as long as the majority of the country do not agree with our non-violent means. There still are some groups of people, especially those who live outside the conflict zone, who do not understand the background and nature of the conflict here (the Malay-Muslim provinces) and prefer the Thai military to apply violent methods to end the prolonged conflict. We need to make them (people in other regions) understand and help us in opposing violent methods from both militants and the Thai military[253].

Civil society in the conflict areas of the southernmost provinces of Thailand has made a lot of progress since the renewed conflict and violence in 2004. Knowledge and the know-how of the expert-led CSOs were transferred to local people through their political participation in civil society during the first stage of civil society development. The second

[252] Interview, a university student in Pattani, February 2013.

[253]Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013..

stage demonstrated the efficiency of the local civil society activists, who applied political skills they learned from the experts and from direct experience of forced/involuntary participation, in helping other victims and making change for their communities. Now, civil society has reached a third stage of development, in which many expert and local organizations collaborate and have gathered into a network. The next stage of development, which has not yet come, could be the creation of national civil society coalitions or networks around the country. When more people participate, it will create mutual trust and understanding among individuals that are likely lead to political integration in a diverse society.

The ongoing conflict and violence brought many academics, and professional civil society actors, as well as funding organizations into the conflict areas in the Deep South. The increasing activities of expert-led CSOs in the conflict areas gradually developed the political skills of local people in civil society activities. The CSOs educated the local citizens to realize about their rights and duties as a citizen, encouraged them to participate in public activities, taught them to work with other people, and trained them to be more confident in expressing their views to others. Thus, the development of these organizations contributed to an overall increase in people's participation in civil society activities, as both activists and participants.

In the following section, we will look more closely at five different groups of civil society actors, starting with the youth, women, business, religious leaders, to the media, in order to explore their roles in political participation during conflict and violence and look at how the ongoing conflict impacts their activities and vice versa.

Youth[254] political participation in civil society

Young Malay-Muslims have played important political roles in the Deep South since the late 1960s, when many student-led organizations such as the Thai Muslim Student Association (TMSA), the Selatan group, and the PNYS group, were established and became very active in political movements, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. Some students who took part in civil society activities during that time became important civil society activists after the re-emergence of violence in 2004. For example, Muhammad Ayub Pathan, a prominent social activist in the Far South, was a former president of the Yala Young Muslim group and participated in the Hijab movement in 1987. He continued his career as member of the local media and participated in many civil society activities. He was a co-founder of the Deep South Watch and became the second President of the Civil Society Council of the Southern Border Provinces in 2016.

Based on my fieldwork in Songkhla and Pattani and follow-up observations of university students I interviewed, youth political participation in civil society in the Deep South was complex. Normally, youth are a politically sensitive group that might easily be convinced to join militant groups[255]. Some Malay-Muslim youth were induced by drugs or money to join violent operations. Two interviewees in Pattani revealed that they were offered a hundred thousand baht by their Malay-Muslim friends who became militants to take part in violent operations when they were high-school students[256]. Another interviewee from the conflict areas of Songkhla revealed that "I had friend who was a drug addict, he was enticed

[254] This study defined youth based on the UN statistical system, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years old.

[255] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, November 2012.

[256] Interview, university students in Pattani, November 2012.

to become addicted to drugs and to then join a separatist group when he was 16-17 years old. Since he decided to join, I do not hear about him anymore.[257]"

Some were persuaded by the ideologies of Patani nationalism and religious belief[258]. The latter group was often selected from the intelligent and well-behaved students. They were trained to be intellectuals of the separatist groups who will be responsible for planning and expanding the group ideology to wider groups of sympathizers and supporters, both local and international[259]. One of the students who was asked to join the insurgents said,

> He (the militant) came and talked to me about the great history of Patani. Then, he invited me to be a part of the fight for independence of Patani. I told him that I wanted to fight for my Patani but I had my own way of fighting. My weapon was a pen, not a gun[260].

So, although there was concern with Malay-Muslim youths being vulnerable and naive, there still were many young Malay-Muslims who were politically active but not convinced easily by the militants. Many of them strongly opposed violent methods and participated in non-violent activities of CSOs. One of the most important factors influencing young Malay-Muslims to participate actively in civil society was education. The success of the 1975 Protest in Pattani and the leading roles of university students in the protest inspired many Malay-Muslim families in the Deep South to send their children to study further at university level. The number of Malay-Muslim university students admitted both in relative and absolute terms increased after the renewed violence in 2004. As shown in

Figure **6-1**, the number of university students from the three southernmost provinces at Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, suddenly increased by a large amount in 2004 and 2005. The number of students from Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat almost doubled

[257] Interview, a university student from Songkhla, March 2013.

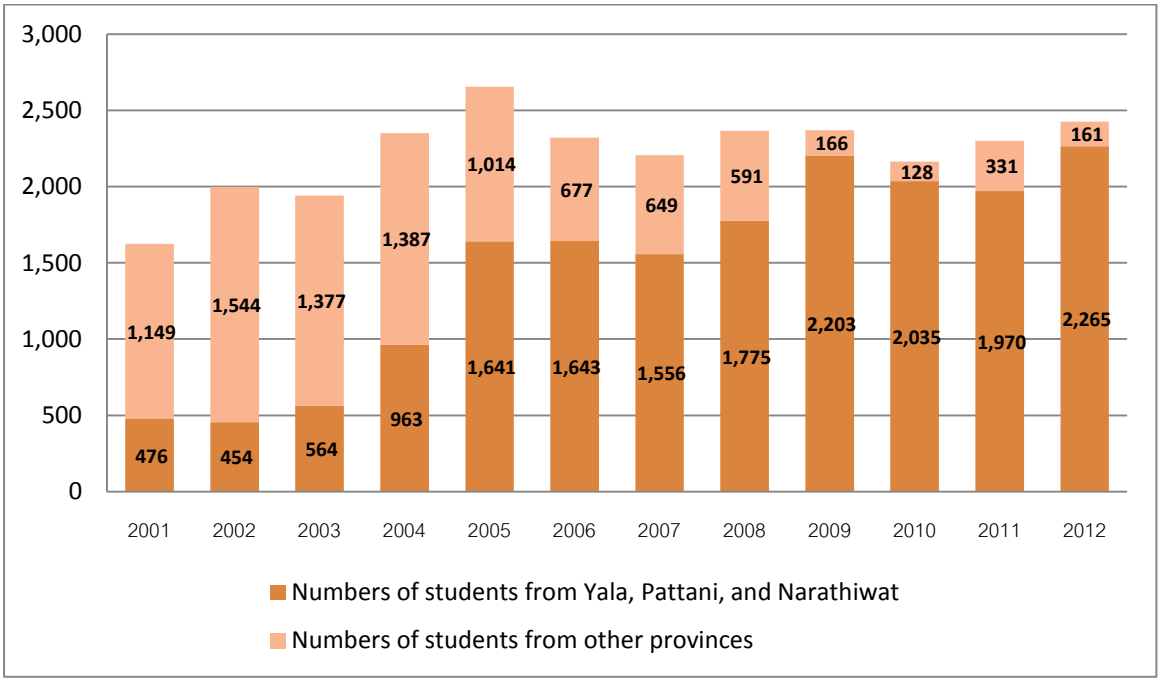
[258] Interview, a military officer in Songkhla and a university student in Pattani, November 2012.

[259] Interview, a military officer in Songkhla, November 2012.

[260] Interview, a university student in Pattani, November 2012.

each year, from 564 students in 2003 to 963 students in 2004, to 1,641 students in 2005, and grew further to 2,265 in 2012.

Figure 6-1: Number of university students at Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, between 2000 and 2012



Source: Registration Office, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus

The ongoing conflict indirectly provided opportunities for Malay-Muslim youths to study in Thai universities more easily. For example, the SBPAC provided a scholarship program to 1,615 students in the restive Deep South, who failed the universities' regular admissions in 2016 to study in both public and private universities, such as Kasetsart University, Chiangmai University, Prince of Songkhla University, Hatyai University, and Bangkok University[261]. Studying at the university level not only built knowledge, but also

[261] For more information on the SBPAC's scholarship program for the development of the southern border provinces, see http://www.sbpac.go.th/index.php/2014-11-27-04-12-16/2015-04-24-03-28-44/115-2015-04-24-03-18-08/1859-2559-2, accessed 20 June 2016.

confidence and political skills in Malay-Muslim youths, which are needed to participate in political activities, and could support an increase of political participation among the Deep South youths.

Although it is generally accepted that education is a key driver of political participation (Almond and Verba 1963 and Hillygus 2005), motivation from experiencing conflict and violence also plays an important role in encouraging participation. The interviews showed that university students in the same course could possibly have different perceptions on political participation. The different experiences of conflict and violence led to different decisions of political participation in civil society. The different decisions involved not only a choice of participation or not participation, but also a choice of which type of CSOs they wanted to participate with.

From interview data, I would like to raise three interesting sample cases of university students, studying in the same faculty of a university in Pattani. The first student (student A) is a Malay-Muslim from a high violent conflict district of Yala province. He had direct experience of aggressive action by the Thai military when he was a high school student. He said his experience from that day has changed his political attitude.

> I was having lunch at my relative's home when a group of soldiers came into the house and shouted for the owner of the motorcycle (that was parked in front of the house). I said that motorcycle was mine. The soldiers then hit me on the back and dragged me to a military truck without asking more questions. I was so scared and desperate because I always heard that many people had changed lives after returning from the military camp[262]. Luckily, my relative came in time and asked a military officer for the reason for arresting me. The military officer said a suspect of a shooting nearby drove the same model as me so they had to arrest

[262] According to the interview, this student believed that Malay-Muslim suspects, who were arrested in the military camp, had a high chance of being tortured during investigations and when they were released, they might be handicapped and unable to live their life properly. Some might be isolated from their neighbourhood due to mistrust of their neighbours.

> all people they found having a similar model of motorcycle for interrogation. Fortunately, I was released and did not have to go to the military camp, a place I was scared of the most[263].

He said it was the first time he started to think about the rights of citizens and that experience triggered his desire for political participation.

> After that day, I had questions about the rights of citizens. Despite living in a democratic country, I did not feel that democracy in Thailand truly existed. I was very upset and angry with that military officer, who hit and shouted at me, but that experience made me want to learn and participate more in politics. I wanted to find out if there were other ways to lessen the conflict and violence without using aggressive actions[264].

When he had to choose a workplace for his internship, he chose to be an intern at a legal aid group in Yala. Although working as internship at a legal aid group did not directly relate to what he was studying and his lecturer mildly disagreed with his choice, he said

> I learned many unexpected stories during my internship, which I would never know from only studying in the university. I saw many local people were suffering from human rights violations and experiencing difficulties accessing the legal system. I wanted to use my knowledge to help them and work for my society. I believed knowledge was my best weapon to fight for my community[265].

After student A graduated, he decided to participate through the state and became a policeman. His case supports a major assumption of this thesis, that experiences of conflict and violence did not prevent some people from the conflict areas from participation. Instead, the experiences of conflict and violence inspired them to participate non-violently and help their hometown. As student A mentioned, "I believe I can apply what I learned from the

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[263] Interview, a Malay-Muslim university student from Yala, February 2013.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid.

university and my internship to help people and my negative experiences from some state authorities reminded me to do things better[266].”

The second student (student B) was from a high violent conflict district of Narathiwat province. He was once a drug addict and at that time he was urged to join a separatist group. A turning point of his life that inspired his desire to political participation was when he witnessed his uncle being arrested by the Thai military at his home.

> The Thai military came into my house and arrested my uncle. He was hit and left bleeding. Although I was only 12, I knew it was wrong that the state authorities abused a citizen like this. After my uncle was arrested, I took note of the date he was arrested and kept every bit of news about him. I felt sad and depressed every time I visited him in prison. He was locked up in chains and I had to talk to him through a glass wall. Because of this experience, I began to be interested in politics and Patani[267].

Student B grew up in a family that believed in Patani self-determination and his family members were very active in non-violent activities relating to the Patani movement. He developed his strong patriotic Patani nationalism from a very young age. When being asked during an interview, where are you from? , normally, students would answer with the name of their province (such as Yala, Pattani, or Narathiwat). Student B said “I am a Patani-Malay. My family lives in Patani (Narathiwat province) and some of my family members live in Malaysia.”[268]

His negative experience from the unjust treatment of the Thai military stirred up his Patani nationalistic sentiments and feeling of opposition to the Thai state but he believed violent means were not the only way to fight for Patani. As he said, “I believed both gun and

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[266] Ibid.

[267] Interview, a student activist from Narathiwat, March 2015.

[268] Ibid.

pen are important (to win the fight for Patani). (Using) a gun can be just a bridge but (using) a pen can take us to the destination (of Patani self-determination)."[269]

He decided to participate in one of the biggest student groups in the Deep South when he was in high-school, and became a leading member of the group. He also, together with his friends, established a student organization in Pattani and participated in many political activities to promote the concept of self-determination. However, since he was very active in political activities for Patani self-determination, he was closely watched by the Thai state and believed he was on the blacklist of the Thai military. Although he strongly believed in non-violent methods of participation, he said, "I will not change (my political ideology and non-violent method). However, if my political spaces were closed in the future, I could not guarantee that I probably would have to find another way, probably a violent one."[270]

The third student (student C) is a Malay-Muslim university student from one of the most frequent violent incidents district of Yala. However, his village had a good relationship with the Thai military and he never witnessed or had direct experience of military abuse. Unlike many Malay-Muslims that had a deep distrust of the Thai state, he had a positive perception of the roles of the military and other state authorities in the Deep South. He became a student activist when he was in high-school in Yala. When he entered university, he still took part in many public activities. He shared his feeling that participation at the university somehow made him feel a little more afraid than when he participated in school activities in his hometown.

> When I participated at the University Student Union, some extremist Malay-Muslim students asked me why I had to help students from other regions, why I became friend with Thai-Buddhists. I have been told that some Thai-Buddhist Union member even received a

[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid.

> threatening notice to quit a position from an anonymous student. Although my hometown had frequent violent incidents, I felt less frightened at home than at the university[271].

After he graduated, he decided to participate in a student organization and became a leading member of the group. His organization, comprising university students from several universities in the Deep South, promoted multicultural collaborations and opposed all forms of violence. The organization is partially funded by the SBPAC. However, being supported by the military brought about some difficulties in drawing participation from some Malay-Muslim youths.

> Some Malay-Muslim youths did not trust our group and perceived that we are a cat's paw of the military. So, they sometimes felt hesitant to participate with us. In addition, some junior students were forced by senior students, who disliked the Thai state, not to join our group's activities[272].

Political participation of student C was shaped and encouraged by his positive perceptions of the Thai state. A respondent indicated that some people generalize the Malay-Muslims as adversaries of the Thai state and believe they would never cooperate with Thai people[273]. The case of student C indicates that their assumption is wrong. There are Malay-Muslims who are not discouraged by the conflict and violence and show their great desire to participate with the Thai state and work together through civil society activities in order to promote pluralism in the Deep South. Yet they often face resistance from other Malay-Muslims who question their motives.

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[271] Interview, a university student from Yala, February 2013.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Interview, university students in Songkhla, November 2012.

The youth organizations in the Deep South seemed to be polarized between those funded by the Thai state and those not funded by state institutions. The two distinct groups had different political opinions and they were difficult to merge. The divergent standpoints among youth groups might discourage political participation of some people who do not wish to take sides, or at least do not want to show their stance. In conflict areas, expressing political opinions might be sensitive and risky. Participating in some youth groups would imply that participants supported or did not support the state. When their choices of participation could be dangerous, some might be afraid that participation might bring them more harm than good. They then decided not to participate[274].

The examples of the three Malay-Muslim university students from the conflict areas of the Deep South illustrate that the different experiences of conflict and violence differently affected their political participation. Student A had direct experience of aggressive treatment by the military. Although it was not a serious case, the incident left a deep scar on his mind. On the one hand, the experience with aggressive state authorities made him afraid so he wanted to keep a low profile. On the other hand, the incident, which he considered as a human rights abuse, caused him to question his own rights as a Thai citizen. Due to considering himself at high risk of being a suspect, he then chose to participate in a human rights organization and quietly help local people's cases of human rights violations without public recognition. Student B had a negative experience with the Thai state; he did not confront the military himself. He decided to join a political student organization and acted openly as a leading member to promote self-determination of Patani and demonstrate against the state's human rights violations. While the former two students had incentive to participate from negative experiences toward the Thai state, student C, who did not have direct experience of the state's abuse, turned positive attitudes toward the Thai state to participation

[274] Interview, university students in Pattani, September and November 2012.

in a state-funded organization. The three sample cases are not meant to be definitive, but are intended to illustrate different patterns of political participation that occur from different experiences of conflict and violence.

In addition, the youth political participation in the Deep South might lead us to re-think about the involvement of religion, that "Malayness was no longer a sufficient ground for galvanizing resistance to the Thai state" (Askew 2010: 127) and the only effective focus of the movement against the Thai state was "religious in nature" (Askew 2010: 128). According to interviews, while many students of the Malay-speaking provinces now accepted that they were Thais, some students strongly insisted that they were Patanians and they participated in civil society organizations to demand, if not independence, the revival of their culture, language, and history[275]. Askew may be right that religion could cause conflict and violence in the Deep South. However, the strong desire of Patanian people to call for Patani self-determination is still fundamental and increasing and that desire motivated some youths to participate in CSO's activities.

According to interviews, participation and cooperation between the Thai-Buddhist and Malay-Muslim youths needed some improvement. A negative attitude among the youths of different religions could impede some youths from political participation and contribute to the conflict. A Malay-Muslim stated that some Muslims were indoctrinated since they were young to believe that Thai-Buddhists are bad. So, there were some Muslims that do not like Thai-Buddhists at all. He said

> Even in my faculty, most Muslim students tended to vote for a Muslim to be a president of the faculty and try to convince other Muslim students not to vote for a Thai-Buddhist. I am Muslim but I do not agree and do not like the idea. It closed the door for the Thai-Buddhists

[275] Interview, university students in Songkhla and Pattani, February and March 2013.

> to participate in student activities and prove themselves. I think this caused more problems and conflict and I want this negative attitude of hatred to be changed[276].

The ongoing conflict and violence have increasingly obstructed political participation combining people of different religions. Another villager from Thepha district said, "although I have Muslim friends, we do not talk about violent issues. I have to be more careful when talking to my Muslim friends. So, we mostly do not participate in the same activities and are not members of the same civil society group[277]."

Students' participation in civil society had influence not only within their groups but also on the wider community. According to interviews, most local people preferred to participate with student activists rather than other activists or state authorities[278]. University students were respected and admired by local people. A student activist in Pattani mentioned,

> Most Malay-Muslims in the Deep South have low education. Many of them are unemployed and were urged easily to join rebel groups. Graduating M.6 [primary school] is regarded as high. So, youths who graduated with a bachelor degree were considered as very high in the eyes of most local Malay-Muslims in the Deep South. So, when these youths spoke to them (local people), they tended to listen[279].

Local people believed local student activists could be trusted. These youths are like their children who wanted to develop their community. Some locals believed students would not betray them so they could openly discuss and express their opinions to these students[280]. Although participation between local people and student activists seemed to be positive, cooperation and participation among student groups with different ideologies are still rare.

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[276] Interview, a Malay-Muslim university student in Pattani, November 2012.

[277] Interview, a Malay-Muslim university student in Songkhla, February 2013.

[278] Interview, university students in Songkhla and Pattani, February and March 2013.

[279] Interview, a student activist in Pattani, February 2013.

[280] Interview, a student activist in Pattani, March 2013.

The conflict and violence built a sense of belonging for the younger generation and motivated them to participate in civil society activities during conflict and violence. However, the different backgrounds and accumulated experiences the youths have added along the way as they grew up differently impacted their participation with CSOs.

Women's political participation in civil society

Political participation through civil society of women in the Deep South tremendously increased after the re-emergence of conflict and violence in 2004 (Saowarot and Utit 2016). According to a report by the King Prajadhipok's Institute (2013), there were at least 136 southern border provinces women's network organizations. In the past, Malay-Muslim women in southern Thailand generally did not participate in political affairs. They remained mostly at home and took care of housework[281]. Since 2004, the conflict and violence has unexpectedly changed the roles of Malay-Muslim women as they have become more active in public activities.

As discussed earlier in the previous section, as soon as the conflict and violence was renewed in 2004, many CSOs in the Deep South during the first few years of violence were expert-led organizations. Local people's abilities were developed through civil society activities where they took part as participants, recipients, or local project coordinators. When the skills of locals were developed, there emerged an increasing number of CSOs of the locals, by the locals, for the locals. The emergence and expansion of women CSOs in the conflict areas of the southern border provinces also followed this pattern.

[281] Interview, a Malay-Muslim woman and civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013.

During the first few years of the renewed violence, there were notable women civil society activists, both Buddhists and Muslims, working during the conflict and violence, such as Angkhana Neelapaijit, a Thai-Muslim woman rights activists and wife of missing Muslim lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit; Pornpen Kongkajornkiat, a human rights activist from Bangkok; Chidchanok Rahimmula, a well-known political scientist from Prince of Songkhla University; Naree Charoenpholpiriya, a National Reconciliation Commission Member and a Thai-Buddhist non-violence trainer; and Soraya Chamchuri, a Malay-Muslim civil society activist who graduated with a Master Degree from Chulalongkorn University.

The prolonged conflict and violence directly and indirectly harmed many families in the Deep South. Some family members were killed and some were arrested. Many women in the conflict areas became indirect victims, having lost family members and experienced emotional and economic suffering (Saeed 2016: 171). The situation forced them to participate in the Thai political system involuntarily. Some wives had to take part through the legal system to fight for justice for their husbands; some mothers had to contact state authorities for financial remedies for the deaths of their sons, and some widows had to join healing and occupational development programs, which were provided by both state agencies and non-governmental organizations, domestic and international[282].

Involuntary participation produced more knowledge and political skills for local women. Some women who were once victims of the violence employed their knowledge and experience to help other women who faced similar fates. The involuntary participation of some women then turned to voluntary participation in civil society. For example, Yaenah Salaemae, whose son was detained due to the Takbai incident, lost her husband who was

[282] For detailed stories of women's involuntary participation in the Deep South, see Thitinob Komolnimi (2005). *Siang khong kwamwang: ruangrao khong phuying phue krabounkarn santiphab chaidantai* [Voices of Hope: Stories of women for peace process in the Deep South] (Pattani: Women's Civic Network for Peace in the Southern Border Provinces).

killed during the unrest in the Deep South. Due to her poverty, she finished just Year 4 (Por 4) of primary school. She could hardly understand or speak Thai but the unfortunate circumstances and her love for her son pushed her to fight for justice for him. She participated in the legal system in her son's case and helped other Malay-Muslims, who could not understand Thai at all, to translate in court or in communication with lawyers. After prosecutors withdraw cases in November 2006, she continued to help other victims by volunteering to work as a civil society activist for her community in order to provide relief to those affected by violence. She later received the Woman Protecting Human Rights Award in 2007 (Thitinob 2013: 76-97).

Moreover, since women were not direct targets of militants and were not suspected by the Thai security forces, they faced lower risks in participating in political activities than Malay-Muslim men. Low risk for women's participation associated with high incentives for some who were already under pressure and were ready to fight for better lives for their families and neighborhood, led to an increase in women's political participation in the Deep South. A female Buddhist journalist, who has worked in the Deep South since the re-emergence of violence in 2004 said that there are a greater number of Malay-Muslim women who have become active in CSOs activities. Many of them work as female representatives in contacting state authorities on sensitive issues. She further explained that;

> Malay-Muslim women in the Deep South nowadays have greater roles than Malay-Muslim men in many areas. We can see many female activists, such as Rosida Pusu, a local journalist and Chairwoman of the Southern Women's Peace Network to Stop Violence, and Patimoh Poh-etae-dao, director of WePeace, the women's advocacy group. Many women activists changed her roles and participated in CSO activities after their families were killed or harmed.

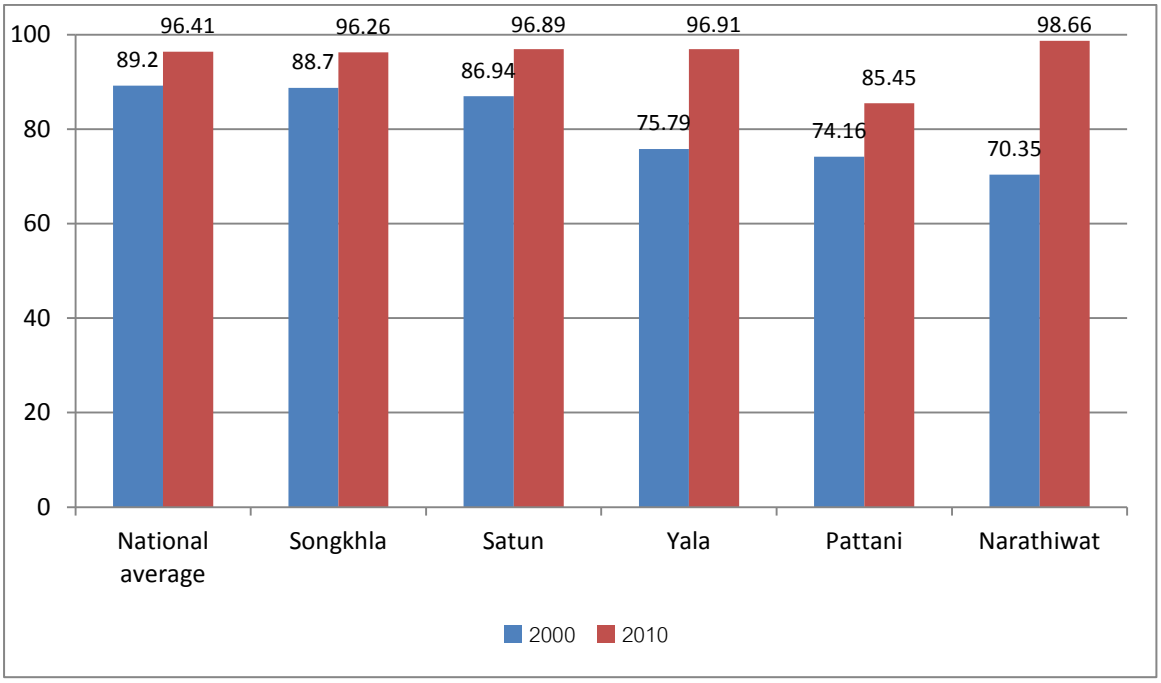
> They started from consoling other women as friends who experienced the same fate. Then they expanded their roles and women networks were created[283].

Women's participation in civil society in the Lower South was not limited to Malay-Muslim women; there were also local Thai-Buddhist female activists, who were very active in civil society. For example, Som Kosaiyakanon, a Thai-Buddhist widow from Yala province, lost her husband, Pol. Maj. Krao Kosaiyanon, as he was killed in an ambush in 2004. After recovering from severe trauma, she took part in treatment programs provided by both the state and by non-state organizations. Participating in those activities made her realize the problems of unjust treatment and difficulties in political participation for some women, especially those Malay-Muslim women who were poor and could not understand Thai. She then established a provincial association for widows in Yala to aid mentally challenged and poor widows, both Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims. Although she graduated only from primary school, she became a well-known civil society activist in the Far South. She worked as a leader of the Yala group of those affected by conflict and violence and as a leading member of the Civic Women's Network in the southern border provinces (Thitinob 2013: 99-107).

Although some studies believed people with high SES are more likely to participate in politics (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), women's political participation through civil society in conflict areas of the Deep South demonstrated a different pattern. In spite of an increasing level of female education in the Deep South, as shown in Figure 6-2, a number of women in the Deep South who took part in civil society activities were poor and could not afford to study, as demonstrated by at least the two examples of Yaenah and Som.

[283] Interview, a female journalist in Pattani, February 2013.

Figure 6-2: Percentage of female population 10 years of age and over can read and write Thai language



Source: The National Statistical Office of Thailand

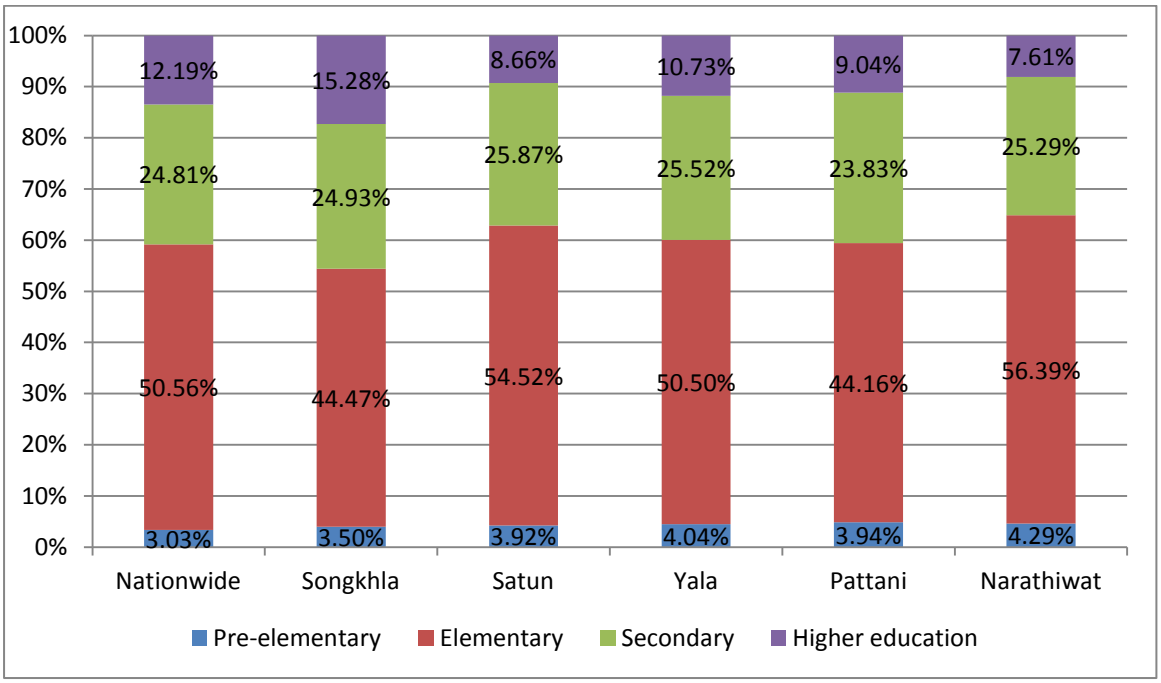
Figure 6-2 shows the rapid development of female education in the Deep South during the 2000s. In 2000, the numbers of females in the Deep South who could read and write Thai were considerably lower than the national average and other provinces in the region. There were only 75.79%, 74.16%, and 70.35% of women in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, respectively, who had literacy in Thai, whereas almost 90% of women in other provinces had ability to read and write Thai language. However, education in the Deep South for women developed rapidly during the 2000s. Consequently, the percentage of literacy of women in the Deep South in 2010 significantly increased, to a higher rate than the national average, except in Pattani, where female civil society groups are highly active[284].

[284] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, March 2013.

When considering the rising levels of education among women, it is noteworthy, as we see in

Figure 6-3 below, that increasing literacy has not yet led to equality in higher education.

Figure 6-3: Percentage of female population 3 years of age and over by educational attainment in 2010



Source: The National Statistical Office of Thailand

Although the percentage of literacy generally developed, the numbers of females in the Deep South studying in higher education were still lower than national average. Narathiwat, which has the highest percentage of female literacy, actually has the lowest rate of females attaining higher education, at only 7.61%, compared to 15.28% in Songkhla, as shown in Figure 6-3.

In the conflict areas, education might not a key factor influencing women's participation. One of the most important factors affecting women's participation was instead grievances from conflict and violence that turned into an emotional incentive. The conflict and violence meant many lives were at stake. Thus, the conflict and violence acted as a powerful force for political participation and provided more opportunities for women to build a better future for their families and communities through the collective action of civil society.

However, some Malay-Muslim women experienced difficulties in participating through civil society. Although women's status is increasingly accepted in Thai society, the interviews from field research revealed that there still were problems of discrimination between men and women on some occasions. One Muslim female activist mentioned that she experienced, more than one time, some Malay-Muslim female activists participating in public conferences being insulted by some Muslim males, who believed a woman having leading role in society was wrong according to their religious beliefs[285].

Gender is a crucial factor in political participation, especially in Malay-Muslim society. When most channels of participation seemed to be limited for women's participation, political participation through civil society is, other than voting, the only real means of participation for most women. Although accepting Muslim female leadership roles would be uncomfortable for some Muslim males, encouraging the greater participation of women in conflict areas is very important and beneficial to all parties in the conflict agenda. This is because firstly, women are neither direct targets of the insurgents nor the main suspects of the military. According to interviews, there has not yet been a report of Malay-Muslim female

[285] Interview, Muslim women activists in Bangkok and Pattani, February and March 2013.

militants in the Deep South[286]. The risks of political participation were considered lower than for Malay-Muslim males, while women's grievances from conflict and violence are high. Secondly, women have unusual capabilities. They can be seen as both strong and submissive, effective and harmless. Their non-violent involvement can easily get support and trust from both the state and local people. So, female political participation has the potential to draw more involvement from other actors in conflict areas.

Business sector political participation

Although strictly speaking perhaps not part of civil society, generally, business organizations act as intermediaries between the state and business owners and have an important role in decision making processes, provincial and national. A representative of a business organization in Pattani further explained that

> We (a business organization) do not only work as a conciliator between private sectors but also as a representative of the business sector in solving economic problems with local government in our province. We also participate in many steering committees, including on economic, social, and even security issues[287].

For the southernmost provinces of Thailand, before the renewed violence, there were not many business organizations in the region[288]. Most of them, such as provincial chapters of the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industry, and the Tourism Business Association in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, were established and active in business policies many years before the unrest in 2004.

[286] Interview, a local reporter in Songkhla, March 2013.

[287] Interview, a representative of a business organization in Pattani, November 2012.

[288] Interview, a representative of a business organization in Songkhla, March 2013.

The renewed conflict and violence directly affected business in the conflict areas of the southern border provinces of Thailand. The economic zones in urban areas of the three provinces were often targets of the violent incidents. For example, Mueang district of Yala, a provincial capital and business center of Yala province had 1,229 violent incidents between January 2004 and January 2014, the highest rate among all districts of the three southern border provinces (Nurseeta et. al. 2014: 41). Many businesses, mostly owned by Chinese-Buddhists and Thai-Buddhists, had to close or re-locate to other regions. Although there are meetings and discussions of members within a business organization regarding the conflict and violence, a business representative accepted that the security problem is beyond his organization's capability to manage.

> We, as a business organization, have a major role in building confidence for businesses. There are two kinds of confidence needed in conflict areas, which are economic confidence and security confidence. We can more or less handle economic confidence but it is a state duty to build up security confidence for us. If the state fails to protect us, we cannot do anything. We cannot guarantee our members that their business will be safe. We cannot convince them (business owners) to stay on. It is beyond our control. So, we need to participate with the state and work together to build up both confidences for our members[289].

The move-out of many Buddhist business owners in turn opened more opportunities for local Malay-Muslims to run businesses in their hometowns. Due to an increase of Malay-Muslim entrepreneurs, there were newly established Malay-Muslim business organizations, such as the Muslim Trading Association of Narathiwat (MTAN), Yala Muslim Business Association (YMBA), and the Federation of Malay-speaking Muslim Businessmen in Southern Border Provinces.

[289] Interview, a representative of a business organization in Pattani, November 2012.

However, the ongoing conflict and violence caused suspicions even within business organizations. A representative of a business organization in Pattani told that even though his organization does not have many Malay-Muslim members, there were feelings of suspicions among committee members of his organization. To avoid more conflict in the organization, they tended not to talk about security issues[290]. The membership process of some business organizations was thus very strict and careful. For example, a new member had to be recommended and ratified by at least two existing members of the organization. Some business organizations were afraid that the greater number of members would cause a higher risk that separatists might infiltrate the organization for malicious intentions[291].

The limitations of membership could more or less lead to a low number of business organization members in the Deep South. For example, despite the rubber industry was one of the most significant economic commodities of the region, only two (out of the total members of 55 nationwide) rubber producers and traders in conflict areas of southern border provinces were members of the Thai Rubber Association[292]. Similarly, the percentage of members of the provincial Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) in the three provinces was quite low compared to the numbers of enterprises and factories in the provinces, as shown in Table 6-1. When compared to other provinces, the level of political participation of the business sector in the Deep South also showed a lower rate than, for example, Songkhla and Satun. In Satun, a Muslim majority province, 13.53% of factories are members of the FTI, whereas less than 10% of factories in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand are members of the FTI.

[290] Interview, a member of a business organization in Pattani, February 2013.

[291] Ibid.

[292] For the list of the Thai Rubber Association members, see http://www.thainr.com/en/index.php?detail=member, accessed 15 June 2016.

Table 6-1: A comparison between numbers of businesses and factories and business organizations' members in the five southern border provinces of Thailand (as of 2015)

Province	Numbers of enterprises	Members of Chamber of Commerce (%)	Numbers of Factories	Members of FTI (%)
Yala	10,690	227 (2.12%)	326	30 (9.20%)
Pattani	17,571	365 (2.08%)	882	46 (5.56%)
Narathiwat	20,799	190 (0.91%)	419	12 (2.86%)
Songkhla	49,080	1,728 (3.52%)	2,280	85 (3.73%)
Satun	13,031	370 (2.84%)	303	41 (13.53%)

Source: Data on numbers of enterprises is from an annual report on the SMEs situation in 2015, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion, http://www.sme.go.th/th/index.php/data-alert/alert/report-smes-year/report-year/report-year-2558, accessed 3 June 2016.

Data on members of provincial Chambers of Commerce is from an interview, the Thai Chamber of Commerce officer, November 2016

Data on numbers of factories is from an annual report on industrial statistics, by Department of Industrial Works, http://www.diw.go.th/hawk/content.php?mode=spss59, accessed 2 June 2016.

Data on members of FTI is from www.fti.or.th

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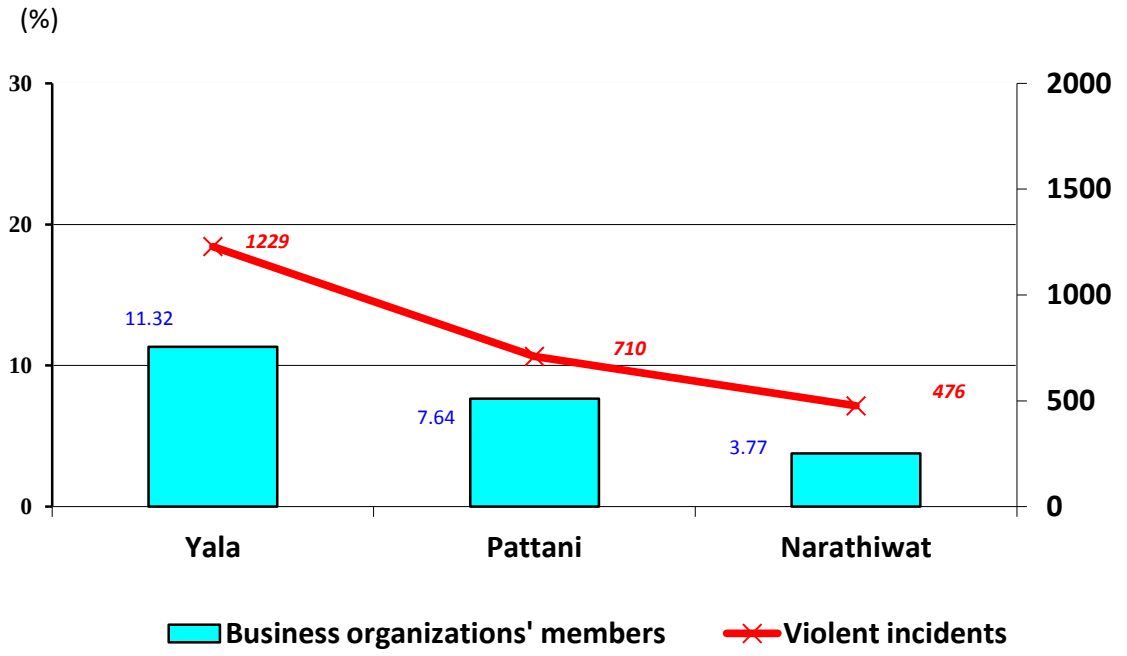
Overall, violence might undermine political participation and create a suppressing effect on affiliation with business organizations. Interestingly, when comparing the percentage of business organizations' members and violent incidents in Mueang districts, the major economic districts of the provinces and locations of most business organizations' members, the data, as shown in Figure 4, demonstrated the relationship between the conflict and violence and political participation in the business sector.

Figure 6-4: Comparison chart of casualties of violent incidents between 2004-2014 in Mueang districts of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat and percentage of members of business organizations in the three provinces in 2015



Remark: The percentage of business organizations' members shown in this chart is the sum of the percentage of members of the provincial Chambers of Commerce and the FTI in Table 2.

Sources: The number of violent incidents was adapted from Nurseeta Phoesalae et al., 2014 "Betong: A Pathway to Stability", *King Prajadhipok's Institute Journal*, 13(2), pp. 41.

As illustrated in Figure 6-4, the violent incidents, among the three provinces, occurred most often in Mueang Yala (1,229 violent incidents), where the province had the highest rate of business organization members (11.32%), whereas the lowest percentage of business organization members was in Narathiwat (3.77%), where the violent incidents in its major economic district, Mueang Narathiwat, occurred least frequently, 476 violent incidents from 2004 to 2014. In general, violence might suppress political participation, however when compared within the violent conflict areas, participation was higher in the areas that had more frequent violent incidents.

Even though motivations to participate in business organizations could be complex, ranging from the cost of a membership fee and benefits to business opportunities, the ongoing conflict and violence, which caused higher risks in doing businesses, unavoidably affected the decision to participate of some business owners. Interestingly, although the percentage of business sector participation in business organizations was not high, we still can see the relationship between violence and participation with business organizations.

However, whereas some business owners might consider participating in a business organization could strengthen their businesses through the collective power of a business organization, many entrepreneurs in the Deep South might disagree or disregard the importance of participation in business organizations. There are many explanations for the low participation rates of the business sector in the conflict areas of the Deep South. Firstly, since most business owners had personal contact with state agencies, they could directly approach state officials without help from business organizations. As one Thai-Buddhist business owner in Pattani explained, "(Business) Problems could be solved more easily and faster if you knew some officials personally. I preferred to contact them directly and personally rather than go through a long bureaucratic process."[293] So, most of them did not need business organizations to connect them with the state. Secondly, since the government had major policies in developing economics and supporting businesses in the Deep South, as this was considered to be one of the effective ways to lessen the conflict and violence, many economic stimulus programs were issued to boost economic development in the conflict areas. Whether or not the business was a member of a business organization, it could receive the same privileges of, for example, tax incentives, a discounted rate for business registration, and low rate interest loans. Thirdly, the conflict and violence brought about a relocation of many businesses, mostly owned by Thai-Buddhists; these departures could possibly lead to a

[293] Interview, an entrepreneur in Pattani, March 2013.

small numbers of business organization members in the conflict areas. In addition, since the business sector was often targeted by militants, some entrepreneurs might consider that participation might bring danger to their businesses. So, many of them chose not to participate in politics to protect their businesses from any risk of violence.

Therefore, political participation of the business sector in the Deep South might be lower than political participation of other sectors, such as youth or women who had higher incentives to participate. Since the business sector was already supported by government policies, most business owners had less incentive for participating through business organizations. At the same time, the business organizations in the conflict areas were selective and careful in promoting more members to join due to the high risk of conflict from strangers. So, the lower incentives and higher risks of business insecurity led to the low participation of the business sector in the conflict areas of the Deep South. Put differently, the economic motivations that set the business sector apart from civil society also affect its level of participation.

Religions and political participation in civil society

Generally, a religion affects everyday life of people and has an important role in shaping moral decisions of its followers. Religion is ingrained in a society. Some laws and norms of a society are based on religious beliefs. For the conflict areas of southern Thailand, roles of religions, both Islam and Buddhism, got much more complicated after the upsurge of conflict and violence in 2004. Religions were not only a shelter for those who needed support, but religions were also part of the conflict.

The religious sector is very important since it is the strongest element that emphasizes the Malay-Muslim identity. At the same time, religion is also a key element that isolated Malay-Muslims from the majority of Thailand's population (Surin 1982: 24). Religion is

considered by some scholars as one of the major causes of the conflict (Liow 2007, Wattana 2007, and Askew 2010). Yet, religion is also a direct victim of the violence. Religious leaders, both Islamic and Buddhist, became symbolic targets of the conflict between the Thai-Buddhist state and the Malay-Muslim separatists. Since 2004, there have been at least 33 Islamic religious leaders and 27 monks and novices killed and injured[294].

In most Malay-Muslim communities, belief and trust in religious leaders in the Deep South was very high. Malay-Muslims believed in their religious leaders in almost all aspects of their lives, including the political dimension. As a Malay-Muslim interviewee explained in his interview,

> Our religion supports political participation. Most Muslims believe that you should participate as a civilian. The Imam is important as he is a center of information. He receives news from the state and outside the community and distributes it to local people. Imam is *ulama* [Islamic scholar]. He is involved in every dimension of Muslims lives whenever you feel wrong or uncertain, you come to ask the imam. The Imam has high influence on Muslims and he can lead people to political participation[295].

Malay-Muslims often decided to ask for help from their religious leaders when they had trouble with state authorities. A representative from a provincial Islamic Council in the Deep South stated that

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[294] Numbers of killed and injured religious leaders were collected from 2004 to 2009 and from 2014 to 2015. See Supaporn Panasnachee et al 2014. สรุปสถิติเหตุการณ์ความไม่สงบในพื้นที่จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ประจำปี 2557: ปีที่มีจำนวนเหตุการณ์น้อยที่สุดในรอบ 11 ปี [Statistical summary of unrests in southern border provinces 2014: the year with the least number of incidents in 11 years]. Deep South Watch, 27 December 2014. <www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/6596>, accessed 1 June 2016. Srisompob Jitpiromsri 2010. Sixth Year of the Southern Fire: Dynamics of InsurgeZszncy and Formation of the New Imagined Violence, Deep South Watch, 10 March 2010, <www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/730>, accessed 1 June 2016. Srisompob Jitpiromsri and Supaporn Panasnachee 2015. ฐานข้อมูล DSID: การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเหตุการณ์ความไม่สงบในพื้นที่จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ในรอบปี 2558 [DSID Database: the analysis of unrests in southern border province in 2015. Deep South Watch, 4 January 2015. <www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/7942>, accessed 1 June 2016.

[295] Interview, a Malay-Muslim university student in Pattani, February, 2013.

> When some Malay-Muslims were threatened and abused by Thai state security officers, they came to the provincial Islamic Council and asked for our help. We (religious leaders at the provincial Islamic Council) did what we could but mostly we could only help in small cases. For example, we contacted a powerful person [*Phuyai*] and asked for his help. In some cases, we directly contact the military to guarantee a suspect's innocence of crime. Mostly, the military and state authorities listen to us and follow our request[296].

A survey in 2015 by the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) also revealed that Islamic leaders were the group of persons that local Malay-Muslims trusted the most in developing peace and security in the Deep South[297]. Due to their influence, many people, including the Thai state, expected religious leaders to act as powerful actors in encouraging voluntary participation.

However, the influence of the religious leaders acted like a double-edge sword. On the one hand, some extremist religious leaders could instigate more conflict and violence by injecting "misunderstandings through misleading presentations of religious concepts" (Rung 2007: 154). Some religious teachers were allegedly key recruiters of separatist groups and the key site of recruitment was religious schools (Askew 2010: 127). One of the former advisors of the SBPAC also accepted that religious leaders had prominent roles in instigating the notion of Patani independence, as he explained:

> Some Islamic religious schools have input thoughts to their students since they were six years old. We (the Thai state) never observed what they taught. We thought a Tadika school was like a baby care center. We never looked at their curriculum. We only focused on the armed force militants in the jungle. Eventually, it turned out that it was the religious schools that

[296] Interview, a representative of provincial Islamic Council in the Deep South, May 2013.

[297] For more details about the survey, see http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/sites/default/files/cscd_survey2015_exsum.pdf, accessed 10 June 2016.

were most powerful in injecting thoughts against the Thai state. When we realized this, it was a bit too late[298].

However, based on conversations with former students in Pattani, not all religious schools and teachers were against the Thai state and opposed to political participation. Each religious school taught differently. Some Islamic teachers taught only religious beliefs and practices; some teachers inserted content about history of Patani and encouraged the nationalist sentiments of Patani. One Malay-Muslim interviewee said, "Studying in Tadika taught me to understand religion and discern the Patani identity but my teacher did not teach me to demonstrate against the Thai state. He just taught me the Patani language and way of life[299]"; some teachers taught students to hate the Thai state and Thai citizens. As one interviewee from Pattani revealed, "When I studied at Ponoh, I was told that Thais were bad and I should not be friends with them"[300]. Since the teachings of some religious teachers seemed to be a threat to national security, the government was suspicious that they were involved with separatism and branded them as terrorists (Tan-Mullins 2007: 149). Some religious leaders had their names on the state's watch list and their students were sometimes closely watched by the Thai state[301].

On the other hand, religious leaders could also support non-violent participation. Some Malay-Muslims believed political participation should be structured in an Islamic way by implementing the concept of al-shura (mutual consultation) into participatory exercises[302]. The principle of al-shura encourages Muslims to have consultation on public affairs with the Muslim community in order to find a mutual resolution that does not violate religious

[298] Interview, a former advisor of the SBPAC, October 2012.

[299] Interview, a Malay-Muslim student from Narathiwat, March 2015.

[300] Interview, a Malay-Muslim student in Pattani, March 2013.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, May 2013.

disciplines. The mutual resolution from al-shura is sacred and obligatory. The consultation under the principle of al-shura can encourage political participation in civil society, as mentioned by Ahmad Al-Raysuni, an international expert on Islamic Study:

> When the matter of concern relates to something held in common by members of the society or which involves others' rights, there is a great need still for consultation. Such consultation should include those whose rights are at stake (or those who are qualified to represent them), particularly when the matter at hand may have consequences that will affect them (Al-Raysuni 2012: 16).

The principle of al-shura has already been implemented in some civil society groups in the Deep South. For example, the community health development projects in southern border provinces of Thailand applied the concept of al-shura by appointing shura councils, including religious leaders, women and youth representatives, and local authorities, and carried out several activities based on the shura process. So, the community members believed the policies of the project that were initiated by participation of the group members would be agreeable to the community and would not violate Islamic concepts[303].

Since religious leaders were highly respected by most Malay-Muslims, the Thai state wanted religious leaders to act as intermediaries between the state and local Malay-Muslims, especially at the grassroots, who tended to avoid directly contacting with the state, in order to encourage further participation and collaboration with them. Some Imams felt that they were caught in between[304]. On the one hand, it was risky for them to participate closely with state authorities because they could become a target of militants. On the other hand, if they did not

[303] Ibid.

[304] Interview, a scholar in Pattani, May 2013.

participate with the state, they might be labeled as not collaborating with state officials and that could cause problems for them too[305].

The roles of religious organizations, such as the Sheikhul Islam Office (known as the Office of the Chularajmontri) and the Office of Provincial Islamic Councils, are also very significant in promoting political participation and improving the civil society-state relations in the Deep South. However, for some local people, these Islamic organizations served as a tool of the Thai state[306]. An officer of the Sheikhul Islam Office explained that

> The Chularajmontri is elected by representatives of provincial Islamic Committees. We (the office of Sheikhul) cannot only serve the needs of the Thai state but sometimes we could not avoid it. There were many times that we were frustrated when we had to act according to the state's request. We try to balance our roles to equally serve both state and Muslim interests[307].

Political participation through formal Islamic organizations might then be obstructed by some suspicions on the roles of the organizations. However, during the conflict and violence, the religious organizations still had an important role in participating with state actors and other religious organizations, such as the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand, in reducing conflict and tension. A representative of the Islamic Council pointed out that "I do not deny that Islamic religious leaders are involved in politics but our involvement and participation is not for personal interest. We participate in politics for the benefits of our society and to bring peace through nonviolent means[308]." There are regular meetings between state representatives and religious leaders, including Muslims, Buddhists, Christians,

[305] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, May 2013.

[306] Interview, an officer of the Sheikhul Islam Office, May 2013.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Interview, a representative of the provincial Islamic Council in the Deep South, May 2013.

Hindu, and Sikhs to discuss the current situation of conflict and violence in the Deep South.[309]

Before the conflict, the formal organizations of Buddhism, such as the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand, did not have much political role in the Deep South. The Buddhist monks mainly emphasize healing people's minds rather than involvement in political matters. However, when the violent conflict has increased, monks were killed and injured, and Wat (temple) were burnt, Buddhist monks and the organizations of Buddhism increasingly participated with state actors and other CSOs to protect Buddhists, monks, and temples from the violent incident. For example, Phra Paisal Visalo, a well-known abbot from Wat Pa Sukato, a forest monastery in the northeastern region of Thailand, was invited to join the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) in 2005; the Sangha Council in the Deep South issued declarations regarding the attack on Wat Phromprasit in Pattani in 2005 and the attack in Kok Pho district, Pattani in 2011. Besides, the roles of Buddhism were changed to far from its principle. Some Buddhism is militarized and temples became armed bases. It created new link, a violent one, between the Thai security forces and the sangha (McCargo 2009: 24).

The ongoing conflict and violence also affected the relationship between the Thai Buddhists and Malay-Muslims. In the past, Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims were not divided. A Thai-Buddhist senior journalist in the Deep South recalled the days when both Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims lived peacefully together.

> We (villagers) helped each other in almost everything, even in funeral or ordination ceremonies, we cooked and shared food. Similarly, when Muslims had ceremonies at their mosques, we, the Buddhists, came to the mosque and helped them[310].

[309] Ibid.

[310] Interview, a journalist in the Deep South, October 2012.

He further argued that the estrangement between the Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims gradually increased, particularly after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. More strict Islamic practices were imported into southern Thailand through students who graduated from Islamic countries, especially Libya, Syria, and Pakistan. They believed that Muslims should not go to other religions' places of worship and should not participate in their religious activities. So when Islamic practices and beliefs became more conservative, the relationship between Muslims and Buddhists in a community gradually weakened[311]. The unrest since 2004 has increasingly eroded their relationship, resulting in a decrease of collaboration and participation of people with different religions in the Deep South.

The ongoing conflict and violence that affected the life and death of people in the Deep South increased incentives for both violent and non-violent participation of both Malay-Muslims and Thai-Buddhists. For the Thai-Buddhists in the conflict areas, although they are the majority in Thailand, they are a minority in the conflict areas of the Malay-speaking provinces. They sometimes felt they were ignored by the government (Albritton 2005: 168). The negative emotion then turned into an incentive for participation.

The conflict and violence turned some men of religion to violence even when against their religious beliefs. Monks were not only victims, but conflict changed them to become "agents of violence" (Jerryson 2011: 4). For example, a Thai monk from Bangkok called for burning one mosque for each Buddhist monk killed in the Lower South through his Facebook, YouTube, and public speech at a meeting of monks (*Prachatai*, 30 October 2015). However, the same incentives that lead people to conflict and violence can cause greater participation. Constructive participation among different religious leaders was established after the renewed violence. For example, the Inter-religious Council of Thailand (IRC-Thailand), founded in 2009, is a Religion for Peace affiliate organization that brings together

[311] Ibid.

faith leaders from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism to work for peace in southern border provinces of Thailand; the Thai-Muslim, Buddhist, and Chinese Association was launched in 2011 in Pattani with the objective of searching for peace in the South.

Although the conflict is mainly between the Thai state and the Malay-Muslim separatists, the consequences of the conflict unavoidably affected innocent people of every ethnicity and religion in the conflict area. The religious leaders were called out to comfort their followers. However, since the conflict and violence directly affected the life and death of adherents on a large scale, including men of religion, it caused pressure on religious leaders to develop their roles from passive actors in politics to be active actors, who initiated and participated in civil society activities. Political participation of religious leaders after the renewed violence was not only for protecting their followers, but also for saving themselves from being attacked.

The media and political participation in civil society

At the beginning of the re-emergence of the violence in 2004, Thai people were surprised and had little knowledge of what was happening in the Deep South. The media became an important source of information that many people looked to for answers and explanations regarding the violent incidents. Most news on the conflict and violence in the Deep South was dominated by the mainstream media, with its contents controlled by various means and degrees of government censorship[312]. Reports on the Deep South conflict and violence were then sometimes distorted. For example, Freedom House reported in 2005 that the Thai government pressured journalists and reporters to adjust news coverage regarding

[312] Interview, a local reporter in Songkhla, February 2013.

criticisms of the government on the violence in the Deep South[313]. Also, the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) revealed that reporters were forced by the Thai police to identify a photographer who took a photo of a soldier firing into a crowd of protesters in one of Thailand's southern provinces in 2004, and some TV reporters were forced to cancel footage of demonstrations in the Deep South[314].

Moreover, as mentioned by McCargo (2000: 3), most of the news coverage in the mainstream media of Thailand is presented with a very high degree of "bureaucratization and routinization." Most news on the Deep South represented state perceptions through interviews of senior politicians and bureaucrats. So, the other side of the story from local people in the areas of conflict and violence was mostly ignored[315]. In addition, most news on the front page of mainstream media, such as Thairath, Kom Chad Luek, and Dailynews, tended to report on the violent incidents and highlight the cruelty of Malay-Muslim militants[316].

In addition, the mainstream media was mostly lacking in giving historical background to readers. Many media reports on conflict and violence in the Deep South were "mostly straightforward and presented without much context" (Phansasiri 2016: 51). They focused more on here and now events, what was happening in the fields, and the casualties. Many reporters tended to sell sensational news to their readers by making front-page news when there were murderers of Buddhists, especially when state officials or monks were killed (Tan-

[313] From Freedom House 2005, *Thailand (2005),* <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/thailand>, accessed on 1 June 2016,

[314] From Southeast Asian Press Alliance 2004, *Thai security option could be pretext for controlling press, too*, <https://www.seapa.org/thai-security-option-could-be-pretext-for-controlling-press-too/>, accessed on 1 June 2016,

[315] Ibid.

[316] For example, a headline by Kom Chad Luek on 18 November 2011, 'Chon tai hod! Wang buemb tahan chud khumkrong kru dub 1 jeb 1' [Brutal southern Bandits! Bombed the armed teachers' escort soldiers, one died one injured]', and Dailynews's headline on 15 February 2013, 'Chon tai proi baiplew khu ao kheun! Len ngarn kru-Thaipud' [Southern Bandit' distributed fliers, threaten revenge! Harm teachers and Thai Buddhists]'.

Mullins 2007: 149-150). This kind of reports, according to Lee and Maslog (2005), was recognized as war journalism, rather than peace journalism. Johan Galtung (1998: 8) explained that peace journalism, instead of focusing only on the conflict of two opposing parties and its numerical results such as the deaths, injuries, and material damages, tends to seek the deeper roots of the conflict, search for all parties involved and their goals, and look for possible solutions to the conflict.

When reading news on the Deep South of Thailand, one is struck by the sad, depressed, and angry feelings of victims. This kind of presentation would affect people's interpretation of the conflict and violence, as well as expand the hatred and hostile sentiments towards the Malay-Muslims in the Deep South. On the one hand, the repetitive news of violent incidents that many readers outside the conflict areas read from the mainstream media creates negative perspectives of Malay-Muslims in the Deep South. On the other hand, the perhaps biased reports on the southern violence of mainstream media may have inspired and motivated some local Malay-Muslims to actively participate in reporting incidents of their hometown from their side of the story. For example, a university student from the conflict areas of Songkhla said that

> I am tired of watching news on TV about the violence in my hometown. I have had a bit of writing talent since I was a high-school student. I published an article about culture and old traditions of my hometown because I wanted to tell other people that my home is not that bad. When I had an opportunity to learn more about being a reporter, I did not hesitate to participate in a young media development program.[317].

[317] Interview, a university student from Songkhla, March 2013.

Moreover, the mainstream media was decreasingly active in reporting news on the prolonged conflict and violence because it could not get as much attention from readers as when it newly occurred in 2004. Although the problem of the conflict and violence in the Deep South remains critical and unsolved, the interest of the Thai public on the southern unrest dissipated and there was not much new information to report. So, many Bangkok-based media gradually decreased coverage on the Southern conflict (Nuannoi 2010: 281). Lessened attention on news of the violence in the southern border provinces negatively affected the Deep South problem. When the media were less interested in the news about the violence, there would be a high possibility that militants would create more seriously violent incidents to keep people in fear and call attention to the Thai government repression. Moreover, without media attention, there could be a greater risk of state violence, for example, the military may carry out abuses and get away then more easily.

Although the Bangkok-based media decreased its attention on the news on the Far South, there were many local media groups that emerged as alternative media to present news on the South from local reporters. For example, the Wartani media agency became one of the leading local media agencies. It was established in January 2011 by a group of young independent journalists in the southern border provinces. The name of "Wartani" came from a combination of two words "Warta", which means news in Malay, and Tani, which refers to Patani, the areas of the southern border provinces of Thailand[318]. The name of Wartani thus well represented its mission to report news for the Malay-Muslims of the Deep South.

Moreover, due to the popularity of internet usage, the printed media was less important as the readers were likely to read news online. This provided an opportunity for smaller organizations or local media groups to report news with lower costs. Therefore, with the help of technology, native reporters and local media agencies were able to expand in the

[318] For more details on Wartani's history, visit http://wartani.com/dev/categories/contact/, accessed 1 May 2016.

Deep South. Due to their better understanding of local culture and the background of the conflict, the native reporters acted as "activists in order to represent from the inside the motives, experiences, feelings, needs and desires of the wider social movements they thus come to represent" (Atton 2002: 495). They also reported some sensitive issues that the mainstream media might ignore, such as the historical background of Patani, the issues of cultural and religious differences, the problem of human rights abuses, and a political campaign for self-determination.

Figure 6-5: An example of a news report on sensitive political campaign in local media

Source: Free Voice's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/media.FreeVoice/photos/a.934960726617900.1073741880.539997196114257/934961153284524/?type=3&theater>, accessed 2 May 2016.

Figure 6-5 shows an example of news posted on the Facebook page of the Free Voice, a local media of youth and Patani students, that reported on students' protest against the security authorities in cancelling a seminar on "Patani's agenda: People's agenda" on 13

February 2016[319]. While most newspapers in Bangkok did not report on this protest, except the *Thai Post* (15 February 2016), *Prachatai* (14 February 2016), and *BBC Thai* (14 February 2016), this student protest was reported widely among online channels of local media, such as Wartani, Deep South Watch, and Free Voice.

There were strong concerns and awareness among new media groups in the Deep South of the importance of reporting sensitive news on conflict and violence[320]. While individuals outside the conflict zone might not be concerned much with the negative effects of reckless news reports that spread to offline and online channels, some Malay-Muslim journalists got together to learn, discuss, and practice reporting news with more caution and neutrality, in order to avoid more conflict in the society. For example, the Deep South Journalism School (DSJ) was founded in December 2010, as a unit of Deep South Watch, to train and develop journalism skills for young reporters in the Deep South[321].

Since 2004, there have been many newly established local media in the Deep South ranging from online news reporters, who might be just one person created a Facebook page to report news on the Deep South, to radio media, such as We Voice, ran by a women's organization, which produced a program on radio, the women's voice for peace. There were attempts by small groups of media in the Deep South to demand constructive reporting that would not expand conflict in the communities. The group of local media expanded into networks, for example, the Community Radio Network of Pattani, and the Deep South Photojournalism Networks (DSP). The increasing roles of local media motivated people, especially the younger generation, to participate more in civil society not only as local

[319] Colonel Pramote Prom-In, a spokesman for the ISOC 4, explained that the topic of the seminar were too sensitive, especially by using the word "right to self-determination", that could possibly mislead to an illegal demand of independence (*BBC Thai* 14 February 2016), <https://www.facebook.com/BBCThai/posts/1739022119652154>, accessed 3 May 2016.

[320] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, February 2013.

[321] For more information on the history and objectives of the Deep South Watch Journalist School, visit http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/about, accessed 1 January 2017.

reporters and journalists, but also as activists and participants. However, the local media in the Deep South was independent and dispersed. There were differences in content between those independent media and the state-supported media, as well as between the Thai-Buddhist media and the Malay-Muslim media. Most people tended to be selective and choose news that fit their views. The influence of local media is still limited to small group of people, especially those who can access online channels. Also, the mainstream media decreased its attention on the conflict and violence problems in the Deep South. These factors might impact negatively in encouraging political participation due to lack of knowledge and create greater risk of violence from both the state and the separatists.

Civil society in the Deep South and the locals

In the Deep South, where the majority of people are Malay-Muslims, many local people were afraid of contacting Thai state officials because of both language barriers and the negative perceptions they had of Thai state authorities, as discussed in previous chapters. The role of civil society was then very important as a third actor that could speak out on behalf of local people, especially the grassroots who mostly lacked political skills. In addition, during the conflict and violence, the Thai government gave importance mainly to national security and aimed at banishing separatists so much that they neglected other grievances of local people. Civil society thus played an important role in helping local people, a silent majority, who suffered the most from the conflict, but played the least significant role in the decision-making process, to increasingly participate in Thai politics.

However, one of the major problems, probably the biggest one that impeded political participation of people in the conflict areas, was the problem of untrustworthiness. Trust is one of the most vital factors that can encourage more participation in a community but

cultivating trustworthiness in the midst of conflict areas is difficult. Although some local people felt more comfortable talking to civil society activists rather than to government officials, civil society activists, especially those from other regions, sometimes could not gain full trust from local people in the conflict areas. A Thai-Buddhist researcher based in Pattani explained that since there were many people from various agencies, both local and non-local activists, who came to talk to the locals, and mostly the same respondants did the interviews, they could not trust the opinions expressed. So, when people came to interview to them, the same story might be told in different ways, depending on whom they were talking to.

> They usually had a certain set of dialogues to answer a certain group of interviewers, such as press, scholars, civil society activists, the Thai military, and foreigners. I am not saying that their information was not true but they chose to cover or uncover some truths when talking to different groups of people in order to save themselves from any trouble[322].

The major problem of political participation through civil society in southern Thailand was that people were too afraid to talk to strangers about conflict issues. The public activities most people were likely to participate in were, instead, the activities that did not involve conflict issues. A local government officer in Pattani mentioned that

> My villagers tended to avoid participating with any activities involved in sharing opinions on conflict issues. Most villagers preferred to participate in activities relating to, for example, occupational and community development. So, when I was asked to tell my villagers to join a meeting with a CSO on a conflict issue, I sometimes had to assign someone to participate[323].

Not only did they distrust outsiders, but also they were afraid of becoming suspects and being threatened by both the Thai military and militants. Therefore, many of them chose to be quiet and not participate in civil society activities. One civil society activist in the Deep

[322] Interview, a researcher in Pattani, November 2012.

[323] Interview, a local government officer in Pattani, March 2013.

South explained that almost every time he entered the conflict area and talked to villagers, he was told by the villagers that a few days after his interviews the military came to meet the villagers he talked to and asked for details of interviews between him and the villagers. Also, the villagers could be suspected by militants if the militants saw them talking to strangers from outside the village[324]. Therefore, local people preferred to keep a low profile. However, there also were some villagers who wanted to participate with civil society but the channels provided for participation were generally limited to some specific group of local people. Political participation through civil society was criticized as it was always the same groups of local people who participated in the activities. One interviewee from Pattani complained that the majority of villagers had few chances to speak out. Most civil society activists came into her village and talked only to the Phuyaiban. Sometimes, the Phuyaiban's opinions, she believed, could not reflect the majority of villagers[325].

In addition, working in the conflict area, which almost everywhere was dangerous and where almost everyone distrusted each other, was quite difficult for many civil society activists. While local people were suspicious and cautious in sharing their information and opinions with CSOs, the civil society activists had to keep a watchful eye on villagers they talked to. They had to be very careful in talking to people with different cultures and backgrounds without knowing which side the person they were talking to was with. So some civil society activists tended to avoid asking sensitive questions in order to engender participation and build trust among villagers.

Moreover, the doubtfulness on the amount and source of funding made local people question the civil society efforts. After the re-emergence of the conflict and violence in 2004, a great amount of funds from both state and non-state agencies, national and international,

[324] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani,March 2013.

[325] Interview, a university student from Pattani, February 2013.

were poured into the southern border provinces. On the one hand, these funds massively helped in increasing capacity of CSOs in the conflict areas. Many local-led CSOs were established to serve the needs of local people in many fields. On the other hand, there were arguments about funding and money flow. Not only was the military accused of retaining a big amount of the budget, civil society was also criticized as they were benefiting from massive amounts of funding given by the government, domestic and overseas non-state organizations, and underground interest groups. There was doubt that their goals in working may not be for the society but for the source of funding that they were committed to. In addition, some people were suspicious that some civil society activists, especially those who owned many projects at the same time, might be intoxicated by the negative influence of money and self-interested persuasion. Some CSOs were criticized for receiving money from donors without a true purpose of helping communities[326].

Does untrustworthiness always impede political participation in the Far South? The answer seems to be "no". According to interviews, some civil society groups were established due to a feeling of distrustfulness. A Malay-Muslim student activist from the conflict area of the Deep South explained that he did not trust the Thai state so he did not trust any state-funded CSOs. He and his Malay-Muslim friends then established their own civil group. His group raised funds from selling local products and submitted project plans for international funds. He said,

> I saw some Malay-Muslim CSOs had to act according to state orders due to the government budget they received. I did not trust them so I and my friends decided to establish our own civil group. We did not receive money from the Thai state because we did not want to be controlled.

[326] Interview, a journalist in Songkhla and a civil society activist in Pattani, February and March 2013.

So, untrustworthiness could both negatively and positively affect political participation through civil society. Participants who distrust one group might get together and form their own group to take part in political activities in their own way.

In general, even though the relationship between civil society and local people is considered better than the relationship between local people and the state[327], fear from violent incidents and suspicion of local people towards the work of civil society might deter them from participating and cooperating in civil society activities[328]. Simultaneously, the same feeling of fear and distrustfulness were also able to encourage some people to participate more in civil society so that they gain more confidence. Finally, although the ongoing violent conflict in the Deep South brought about the emergence of numerous civil society organizations in the conflict area, ranging from village-level to international-level organizations, most CSOs were located in urban areas, such as Mueang districts of the three provinces[329]. Thus, despite the existence of a growing number of CSOs, many civil society activists being active in the conflict areas are middle class, such as university students and professional civil society activists. Their work was not able to draw participation from the wider grassroots levels, especially in the remote areas, where the role of civil society is needed the most.

[327] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, November 2012.

[328] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013.

[329] For information on the list of civil society organizations in the Deep South, see http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3201, accessed 20 December 2015.

Civil society in the Deep South and the Thai state

In theory, civil society should function as an independent actor outside governmental control and influence but be able to make linkages between the two sides, society and the state (Gellner 1994, MacGaffey 1994, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 1998). As discussed in Chapter 2, the relationship between the state and the civil society is sometimes problematic. On the one hand, the state and the civil society could be a good partner, who supported each other. Civil society acted as an intermediary with the state in promoting policy to local people and forwarding demands of local people to the state. On the other hand, the state and civil society could be enemies of each other. The roles of civil society in counterbalancing the power of the state occasionally caused them to act against state policies.

Civil society activities thus sometimes caused trouble rather than collaboration, at least, in the eyes of the state. The negative views of the state towards civil society activists led to attempts of government control of political participation through civil society. In the conflict area, where the military and the state wanted to repress dissidents to protect national security, the roles of some civil society activists, such as those who promoted Patanian human rights and self-determination, might be perceived by the state as danger to state security. So, although, in theory, civil society is "an arena beyond state control and influence" (MacGaffy 1994: 169), the state, especially in the conflict areas, is unwilling to allow full freedom of the civil society. Implementing government control is considered by the state as a necessary method to ensure power over its citizens, especially those who tended to act against state power[330].

[330] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, February 2013.

The relationship between the Thai state and civil society organizations in the Deep South demonstrated a similar pattern. The Thai government has played a two-pronged strategy towards the civil society in conflict areas. On the one hand, the Thai state encouraged political participation through civil society by funding and supporting many local CSOs and cooperating in many civil society activities. For example, the SBPAC initiated a project, volunteers for development of the South, to engender participation of local people in community development (*Manager*, 2 December 2015); ISOC provided funds to support some student organizations to promote non-violent participation in the Deep South; and the Thai government gave funds to each village in the Deep South to establish local civil society groups. However, some complained that villagers had little knowledge for managing CSOs. So, the groups mostly were short-lived and ineffective[331]. An interviewee from Pattani said, "my village has some local groups formed by the Phuyaiban. When the village received funds (from the government), they formed a group. These groups do not last long depending on how much funding they received[332]."

Although the Thai state increasingly illustrated a willingness to participate with civil society organizations by joining and supporting many civil society activities, the Thai state occasionally acted in a way that seemingly opposed political participation of CSOs. Government control can come in a variety of ways; for example, many civil society activists could not gain trust or draw people to participate with them because the military followed closely behind them. "Whenever I talked to villagers, after I left, the military came and asked the villagers what we talked about. They felt unsafe and did not want to participate with us anymore", said a human rights activist in Pattani[333].

[331] Interview, a local authority and a civil society in Pattani, February and March 2013.

[332] Interview, a university student in Pattani, February 2013.

[333] Interview, a civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013.

In addition, some active civil society actors were arrested and accused of involvement with separatism. For example, Muhammad Anwar bin Isamel Hajiteh or Anwar, a civil society activist from Pattani and a co-founder of Bungaraya News, an alternative media outlet in the Deep South, was arrested and detained by the military as a suspected insurgent. He had participated in many civil society activities after he was newly graduated, to promote non-violent participation as a way to develop peace in the area. However, when the Supreme Court verdict was delivered in May 2013, it created a shock wave to not only his family, but also to many civil society activists in the area. The Supreme Court issued a verdict of 12 years imprisonment due to the charge against him of being a member of the BRN (*Prachatai*, 14 May 2013). Although there was a campaign to free Anwar throughout the region, the impact was not strong enough to pressure the government to reconsider his case. Fortunately, after almost four years of imprisonment, he received a royal pardon and was released in January 2017 (*Bangkok Post*, 30 December 2016).

The case of Anwar, who decided to participate in civil society as a local journalist, had a lot of impact on the work of civil society in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. On the one hand, this case destroyed the morale and good will of activists, who worked and participated in civil society activities, and undermined confidence in the Thai government attitude towards civil society activities. On the other hand, there still were many civil society activists who were inspired by the Anwar case. A local journalist and civil society activist said, "I were afraid after the decision of the Anwar case but at the same time I was motivated to work harder in order to prove our intention in working for our brotherhood in the conflict areas."[334]

[334] Interview, a journalist and civil society activist in Pattani, March 2013.

The roles of civil society in counterbalancing state power sometimes caused more conflict between the state and the civil society. The state's aggressive actions towards civil society activities would be seen more often if their activities related to issues of violation of human rights and self-determination, which were considered sensitive issues for Thai national security. For example, a complaint was filed by ISOC against three human rights activists, Somchai Homla-or, a Thai-Buddhist member of the Law Reform Commission of Thailand, Pornpen Khongkachonkiet, a Thai-Buddhist Director of the Cross Cultural Foundation, and Anchana Heemmina, a Malay-Muslim President of the Duay Jai Group, due to publishing a report on human rights violations and torture of Malay-Muslims in the Deep South. The ISOC Region 4 spokesperson, General Pramote Promin, claimed that the report was based on false information and questioned the aim of the alleged activists saying that they aimed to discredit the ISOC and destroy the country (*Prachatai,* 9 June 2016).

The conflict and violence made it difficult for the Malay-Muslims in the Deep South to have an ideal civil society. Even though the degree of government control is different depending on the different degree of violence and level of trust in CSOs, government control negatively affects political participation and, in turn, obstructs the state's objective of national integration.

Drawing Contrast: a direct comparison of conflict and non-conflict areas

In this section, we will explore how people in different violent conflict areas with different degrees of government control participated in civil society. Generally, political participation in non violent conflict areas is considered less complicated than in conflict areas, where political participation could bring negative effects and danger. However, in

Ranot and Sathing Phra districts of Songkhla province, the expansion of CSOs and the level of political participation of local people in civil society activities was seemingly lower than in the conflict areas. Since political participation through civil society is voluntary, it is possible that people in non violent conflict area might have less incentive and motivation to participate.

Although Ranot and Sathing Phra are distant from violent incidence of the Deep South, the districts had their own community conflict that needed the collective power of local people to make sure that mutual interest of the community can be met. Unlike the Malay-speaking districts, most conflict in Ranot and Sathing Phra was mostly a single issue based, such as conflict over natural resources, and mainly disputes between local people and the private sector, rather than disputes between the locals and the Thai state. Political participation through civil society in Ranot and Sathing Phra was formed mostly to increase negotiation power of local people against the private companies[335]. For example, the fishermen folk group in Sathing Phra district was formed by a group of village fisher folk, who lost benefits from fishing. The group became active after the arrival and operation of an oil exploration and production company in the Gulf of Thailand. However, after the group members successfully received compensation from the company, their efforts ended.[336]

Most civil society groups in Ranot and Sathing Phra were loosely formed to achieve a single task. Most local civil society groups in the non violent conflict areas of Ranot and Sathing Phra were then short-lived and informal. As a civil society activist in Songkhla stated, "when group members were successful in negotiation and received satisfaction, they functioned no more and became inactive[337]". Although most villages had local civil society groups, such as farm women groups and fisher folk groups, they were small, comprising

[335] Interview, a local authority in Chana district, March 2013

[336] Interview, a local authority in Sathing Phra district, February 2013.

[337] Ibid.

dozens members in each village, and did not have much political influence. One civil society activist from Songkhla explained that most local civil society groups in Songkhla were ineffective because they lacked political and management skills in running their groups. He believed most successful civil society organizations needed to be managed or headed by experienced activists, such as academic and professional activists[338]. Although there was some collaboration between the local-led civil society and the expert-led organizations, such as Greenpeace, the collaboration was short term and was not able to transfer the know-how to the locals.

Moreover, since the areas are distant from the Lower South, where frequent bombings and shootings have taken place, Ranot and Sathing Phra districts did not attract major resources of either the Thai state or civil society. The necessity for civil society in the area to act as intermediary for local people was less than in the Malay-speaking districts because local people do not have language barriers and feelings of fear and distrust of the Thai state officials. One interviewee from Ranot gave his opinion about participation in his village that "I think they (villagers) think it (the violence) does not involve them and they are not tormented by the current violent incidents[339]." One student was asked to participate in a protest against oil palm plantations along Songkhla Lake by his lecturer. He said, "I participated in the protest because my teacher told me to. I was afraid that if I did not join the protest, it might affect my mark. I think I might not have participated myself if no one asked me. The protest did not involve me in any way.[340],,

[338] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, February 2013.

[339] Interview, a university student from Ranot, February 2013.

[340] Interview, a university student in Songkhla, February 2013.

So, with the low incentives of participation through civil society, people in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts tended to solve their problems by themselves through direct contact with state authorities[341]. Despite having the least government control among the three case studies, the impact from conflict was not strong enough to motivate people to participate.

For people of Chana and Thepha, who live in low conflict areas that had sporadic violent incidents, political participation was highly motivated by a desire to prevent more conflict in their community. Moreover, since the violent incidents did not occur as much as in the three conflict prone provinces, people felt they were at lower risk into participating than those in high conflict areas. The two conditions significantly contributed to a high rate of political participation through election and the state, as discussed in previous chapters.

However, political participation through civil society in Chana and Thepha districts did not get as much attention as other channels of political participation. Although the areas were under the special security law, the 2008 Internal Security Act, the law did not prohibit political activities. So, people in Chana and Thepha had freedom to participate in politics. According to interviews, some villagers of Chana and Thepha, districts believed to be hideouts of some armed militants, showed great enthusiasm in community fora (Wethi prachakhom). In a community forum, villagers, including religious leaders, senior villagers, men and women, and even the youth, brainstormed and discussed problems or village development projects. One Malay-Muslim university student from Thepha district explained that his village had regular meetings after Friday prayers. Most villagers would get together and share their opinions on general politics and village problems. He gave a further example,

[341] Interview, a university student in Songkhla, February 2013.

> When there were government funds distributed to my village, the village chief arranged a community forum. Dozens villagers took part in the meeting and they shared opinions on how our village should use the funds. Although I was only a teenager, I proposed my idea to the meeting. I suggested they built a village library.[342].

Although he was the youngest in the meeting, his proposed idea was supported by many villagers and the community agreed to use the funds for building a library, "I was glad that I participated in the meeting and I was so proud that my voice was heard by the elderly in my village," said a Malay-Muslim university student from Thepha[343]. Political participation through civil society could also be found among the Thai-Buddhists in the conflict areas of Chana and Thepha. A Thai-Buddhist university student revealed that he was a member of a youth group in his village. He said, "our group consists of 50-60 youths. We formed this group to represent opinions of the younger generation in the village. In the past, the elderly always neglected our voices so we wanted to make our voice louder as a group of youth."[344] Another student in Thepha said, "The ongoing violence motivated me to participate in civil society activities. I wanted to solve the [violence] problem. I believed, since I was born and live here, I may know about the problem better than the government[345]." Similarly, one student from Chana said that he wanted to participate in resolving the conflict and violence. He wanted it to stop. However, in his village, he complained that "the adults always neglect opinions from the youth. There is no group of young people in my village[346]."

[342] Interview, a university student from Thepha, November 2013.

[343] Ibid.

[344] Interview, a university student from Thepha, September 2012.

[345] Interview, a university student from Thepha, February 2013.

[346] Ibid.

Since Chana and Thepha have a low rate of violent incidents, the area does not attract many civil society activists. While a university in Pattani, a high violent conflict area, has many civil society activities, a university in Songkhla has few civil society organizations come to arrange activities and even when they did, not many students participated in those activities, especially those relating to the violence issue[347]. The low violent conflict areas were not at the center of attention of many expert-led organizations. The knowledge and resources from the professional activists was important to generate greater capability and awareness of community members for civil activities. So, the areas lacked additional resources to encourage more public participation.

In addition, most local people in Chana and Thepha did not have a language barrier in contacting the Thai state themselves. They did not need a CSO to act or speak out for them. However, for some specific problems that individuals could not solve, local people of Chana and Thepha were able to form civil society groups, with assistance from experts, to create greater impact on the specific issues. Although CSOs in Chana and Thepha were not many, compared to the high violent conflict areas, they were quite strong and active, such as the anti-pipeline groups in Chana, and the anti coal-fired power plant groups in Thepha. For example, hundreds of villagers and activists from the anti coal-fired power plant groups in Thepha joined with the anti coal-fired power plant groups in Krabi province to protest against the building of the coal-fired power plant in demonstrations at the parliament in Bangkok in February 2017 (*Matichon*, 17 February 2017).

Generally, in the high violent conflict area, the ongoing conflict and violence brought large amounts of funds both from governmental and non-governmental organizations[348]. The large budget contributed to the development of civil society capabilities and attracted more

[347] Interview, a university student from Thepha, March 2013.

[348] Interview, a university lecturer in Pattani, March 2013.

attention of CSOs to work in the conflict areas. As discussed earlier, when the experts came, their knowledge was transferred and political participation was increasingly promoted. As a result, there was an increase in numbers of CSOs led by local activists who were trained and supported by the professionals and/or the government in high violent conflict areas of Mueang Pattani.

In addition, Mueang Pattani is the site of the first university in southern Thailand, Prince of Songkhla University (PSU), Pattani campus. The university is a base of several CSOs, such as Deep South Watch (DSW), the Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South, and Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD), and many civil society activities were organized at the university, such as conferences and seminars on the conflict and violence, public hearings, and human rights campaigns. Participating with those CSOs gradually encouraged the development of public consciousness and political participation. When asked which CSOs she knew the best, a Malay-Muslim university student in Pattani said, "I would say Amnesty International (AI) Thailand because I participated in its activities many times at the university about human rights issue. I, later, became its member and regularly participated in the AI's activities[349]." There were about 20 Malay-Muslims at the PSU, who were members of the Amnesty PSU Pattani club and some of them still continued to participate in the AI's activities even after they graduated[350]. Moreover, studying in university level developed attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enhance the civic and political skills of student. Some students were inspired and motivated by the conflict and violence at their hometown and their experiences of political participation during their times in the university. Some of them made resolution to work for the public benefit and some of them

[349] Interview, a university student in Pattani, March 2013.

[350] Ibid.

formed a civil society group after graduation[351]. One interviewee from Pattani expressed about his intention to work as a civil society activist that

> Local people do not know much about the current situation, even my family, they do not know that the violence is conflict between the two sides (the Thai state and the separatists). They just know that there are violent incidents from bandit. Most people do not know the history or sources of conflict. As a university student who has some knowledge, I set up a group with my friends and try to give local people more information. Though I can access to only small group of people, I keep trying[352].

However, there were concerns that political participation through civil society in Mueang Pattani could not reach the lower class in rural areas. As one interviewee from Pattani mentioned, "There are many CSOs in the Deep South but they are not strong enough. They cannot access to every village. They mostly promoted and operated their activities in universities, urban areas, or some big villages or districts, not in the rural[353]." This was possibly true because the high risk of violent incidents impeded the access of civil society into the rural areas. Most participants and civil society activists were then concentrated in the urban areas that provided more opportunities for the middle class, who needed the least help from civil society, to participate. At the same time, some local people in rural areas disregarded political participation in civil society. A local authority in remote area of Mueang Pattani revealed that

[351] Based on the interviews and follow-up observation.

[352] Ibid.

[353] Interview, a university student in Pattani, February 2013.

> Most villagers in the rural preferred to participate in the "fast food" activities that provided convenient and fast services. A CSO organizing a training program would receive less attention from villagers than a CSO giving out, for example, personal belongings or agricultural equipment. If we wanted them to participate in a training program or a meeting, we mostly had to force or push them to participate. Otherwise, there was a high chance that they would not come[354].

Despite the fact that people at the grassroots level are most in need of civil society assistance, the roles of civil society rather involved the middle class in city areas. Most CSOs in Mueang Pattani had limited ability to reach local people in rural areas and failed to encourage more participation in civil society activities of people at the grassroots level, who needed it most.

When comparing political participation through civil society of the three study areas, the differences in possible risks and incentives from the conflict and violence, a degree of state control, and the capabilities of CSO itself shaped a pattern of political participation in civil society. In non violent conflict areas of Chana and Thepha, which people had low risk, low incentives, and there was no state restriction on political participation, most civil society organizations popped up for single-issue based. After they fought and won the battle, most of them disappeared. Generally, a single issue based CSO would fade away after the project is done unless that CSO was able to generate a linkage and collaboration with other civil society groups (Darngnapasorn 2015: 242). However, in Ranot and Sathing Phra, the transformation rarely developed. So, the roles of CSOs were discontinued after the project was done and the CSO was not able to encourage more participation. In Chana and Thepha, the low violent conflict district, since the violence is ongoing, the work of CSOs had more continuity. However, the areas faced another problem that obstructed participation and the work of

[354] Interview, a local authority in Pattani, February 2013.

CSOs. Since Chana and Thepha had less frequent violent incidents, they did not attract enough resources from both domestic and international organizations to expand and continue the roles of CSOs in the area. So, their capabilities were limited without support. Most resources for civil society were dumped into the high violent conflict areas, such as Mueang Pattani. The high rate of violent incidents, in turn, attracted more attention and resources from state and non-state agencies. The increasing resources from various sources of funding generated more capabilities of local civil society activists and participants. In addition, their activities and collaborations were continuous as long as the conflict and violence were prolonged. Moreover, although most CSOs in Mueang Pattani originated as single-issue based, they expanded networks through collaborations with other civil society groups. For example, the gathering of 13 student groups and CSOs in Mueang Pattani in January 2016 to seek an end to violent acts toward children. Their activities included meetings, a walking campaign, and making a statement on child abuse. There were about 500 participants who joined the activities (*Deep South Watch* 18 January 2016). When the networks of CSOs are strengthened, it promotes stronger political participation in the conflict areas.

Conclusion

While political participation through the state in conflict areas of the Deep South was relatively low and ineffective, political participation through civil society seemed to be increasing both in numbers and importance, particularly after the renewed violence in 2004. Civil society organizations in the southern border provinces of Thailand are gradually increasing and becoming increasingly important actors in the ongoing conflict and violence agenda. There are more than 400 CSOs in the Deep South (Deep South Watch, 11 May 2011) in a wide variety of fields, ranging from human rights, education, economics, environment, to

women, childhood problems and community development. Civil society helped many locals in conflict areas to non-violently raise their grievances to the state and guided them to raise their voices more efficiently.

The roles of civil society in conflict areas of the Deep South were challenging and complicated. Working in the midst of conflict and violence, where everyone distrusted everyone else, could cause difficulties and limit the roles of civil society activists in encouraging participation in group activities, especially with the grassroots in rural areas. However, distrustfulness was also able to create more political participation of new groups of civil society activists, who were motivated from the feeling of untrustworthiness during conflict experiences, as explained earlier.

The renewed conflict and violence brought many expert-led CSOs into the conflict areas of the Lower South. The achievement of expert-led CSOs gradually developed the political skills of local people, who participated in civil society activities. Moreover, the practices and accumulated experiences from forced participation with the Thai state trained and inspired both direct and indirect victims of the conflict and violence to participate actively in local civil society. In making stronger collaboration and power of local civil society, the regional civil society networks were gradually enlarged to connect local civil society, expand the reach of CSOs, and gain more power and influence in the state's decision making process. However, attempts of CSOs in the Deep South to influence state policies were obstructed by the top-down policies of the Thai government. A civil society activist in Songkhla pointed out that

> We saw some weak points in the government policies but we did not have much chance to participate and propose our ideas. For example, the first round of talks with the BRN involved only the state and the BRN. We, in civil society, could only observe. We plan to discuss the talks with other civil society groups in the Deep South and will propose our opinions to the

> Thai state. The Thai state does not have integrity and is not quite open for public opinions regarding this issue. So, we, a civil society, have to work a lot harder to increase our roles in the public policy making process[355].

Political participation in conflict areas was generally complicated. The fact that the ongoing conflict and violence involved complex elements contributed to a difference in the rate of political participation and the effectiveness of CSOs. Unlike political participation through the state, political participation through civil society was completely unforced. However, political participation through civil society is mostly reserved to the middle class. As an interviewee from Pattani said, "most lower class people do not participate, except political participation through elections, which does not need much political skills and knowledge.[356]" In this sense, civil society in the Deep South is oriented toward the middle class people, who need it least, rather than those at the grassroots, who need it most due to their inability in political skills and communication with the Thai state.

One of the most crucial success factors in promoting political participation through civil society was state support. However, due to the violent situation, the Thai state decided to control and enforce some restrictions on the freedom of civil society activities in the conflict areas. Although the Thai state increasingly supported the roles of civil society through many grants and projects, it selectively impeded civil society activists in their activities. In this sense, civil society in the conflict areas of the Deep South has largely been controlled in its activities by the state, either through coercion or funding. So, despite the rapid growth in numbers of CSOs in the Deep South, the tight government control in conflict areas prevented civil society from performing its proper role and undermined public participation.

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[355] Interview, a civil society activist in Songkhla, March 2013.

[356] Interview, a university student in Pattani, February 2013.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this thesis, I study political participation during conflict based on 5 hypotheses. The results highlight an overlooked positive side effect of conflict and shed some light on the prolonged conflict and violence in Thailand's Deep South. The validation of each hypothesis is discussed below.

H 1: Conflict leads to a greater desire for peaceful political participation

When most people think of 'conflict', they tend to imagine a confrontation that ends with violence. From this thesis, we learned that conflict can be seen to stimulate positive forms of participation. The conflict and violence act as trigger that pull stimulate people's motivations to participate through non-violent means, largely due to experiencing violence and suffering. Therefore, the experiences of conflict and violence, instead of leading only to violent actions, also create a greater desire for people to be more active in politics through peaceful means as they seek to reduce suffering from the insurgent violence. The thesis also demonstrates a more complex picture. While people in the conflict areas seem to have a significant increase in electoral participation, which is a low-level of participation, political participation through the state and civil society, which are higher levels of participation, seems to have a more mixed outcome.

This hypothesis is supported by the high rate of meaningful participation of people in the conflict areas through various means. Political participation through elections, as discussed in Chapter 4, not only showed increasing rates, but also a change in electoral behaviour. The conflict and violence not only increased the desire to vote but also made a

significant impact in changing voters' electoral behavior to a greater concern with policy than political party or personal qualifications of a candidate. As evidenced by the result of national elections after the re-emergence of violence, most voters tended to vote for the candidate they believed could potentially deliver effective policies to lessen the conflict and violence.

For political participation through the state, due to the feeling of distrust and fear, many Malay-Muslims felt insecure in contacting state officers and chose to avoid political commitments, especially when they were affected by mistreatment by Thai state officials. Although some parts of the state are trusted a bit more than others, like the judiciary or the SBPAC, political participation through the state in high violence conflict areas largely became personalized rather than institutionalized.

Civil society in the Deep South may be able to circumvent the broken linkage between the locals and the Thai state. Unlike political participation through the state, political participation through civil society is unforced and voluntary. A decision to take part in civil society is based on individuals' freewill, that is, people make their own choice to participate without being forced or legally obliged. As discussed in Chapter 6, there are a number of Malay-Muslims who turned their experiences of conflict and violence into motivation for participation and became activists in the community.This is evidenced by an increase of local-led CSOs established by victims of the conflict and violence in the Deep South and by some specific cases of student and women activists. However, political participation through civil society is sometimes diminished by a feeling of distrust in civil society activists. Some people feel it is unsafe to talk to some activists as they are not sure if the information they give will hurt them later. Sources of funds also create doubt that goals in the work of CSOs may not be for the society but for the funders that support them.

Thus, while in general the level of political participation increased, especially through voting, the distrust in the state and civil society created higher risk that impede people from participation and participation become more personalized. Political participation through the state and civil society then showed a more mixed outcome.

H 2: People in a conflict zone are more likely to participate in politics in other forms, including electoral and non-electoral ways.

The thesis shows that people living in a violent conflict area do not always get involved with violent means. On the contrary, they are more likely to participate through some forms of non-violent participation when they perceive incentives are high enough to overcome risks. Based on the study, people in the conflict areas do not disregard participation. Experiencing many losses and deaths could be a prime motivation for some Malay-Muslims to seek a way to stop all the conflict non-violently. The high rates of voter turnout in the Deep South indicate that many Malay-Muslim voters desired to solve the conflict and violence in a non-violent form. Other sought to participate as political representatives. There were a number of Malay-Muslims, ranging from the former elites of Patani, to religious leaders, to new entrepreneurs, who entered in the Thai political system as politicians in order to take part in the state's policy making process in the Thai parliament. The conflict and violence, although it is not the only reason, encouraged a desire for participation among people who live in the midst of conflict areas.

Political participation through the state is seemingly the least used among the three channels since most local people only involuntarily participated, by force. This thesis indicates that political participation through the state in the conflict areas of the Deep South comprised both negative and positive participation. The two types of political participation

are not separated but impact each other. Involuntary participation could undermine voluntary participation. On the contrary, if people had positive experiences from involuntary participation, such as being treated fairly while they were in trials, it could reinforce positive participation. In addition, there are also a number of people who choose to collectively participate in civil society activities, instead of participate individually through the state, to increase their voice and power to fight against state power and make their grievances heard.

This thesis found that political participation through civil society in the conflict areas of the Deep South has greatly expanded. As discussed in Chapter 6, there are groups of people, such as youths and women, who are very active. Compared to other regions with no violent conflict, Malay-Muslim and student activists are very active in public activities. The increasing roles of the local-led CSOs illustrated that experiences of conflict and violence did not prevent some people from the conflict areas from participation. Instead, the experiences of conflict and violence inspired them to participate non-violently to help their hometowns.

H 3: There is a relationship between level of violence and level of political participation as follows;

- **The same concerns that lead to violence also lead to participation**
- **People's experience of the violence has an additional impact on their desire for political participation.**
- **Thus, high levels of violence correlate with a high level of peaceful participation.**

The thesis finds that the levels of violence and levels of some forms of political participation are correlated: the more frequent the violent incidents, the higher the level of some forms of participation. The frequent violent incidents became an additional concern that affected people's desire for political participation. However, since they have high risks of

participation, people living in the midst of violence seem to be very careful and chose to participate politically only when they think it is important and can create an impact on society. Political participation is very important to them as it may be the only way possible they can have their voices heard by the Thai government. So we see some corrupted or ineffectual participation might not attract participation, such as the Senate election, as discussed in Chapter 4. As with other channelsof participation, they demonstrated a greater desire for political participation but they were willing to take the risk if they thought their participation could lessen the violence.

The study finds that in some cases even involuntary participation could bring about positive participation in the conflict areas. As discussed in Chapter 5, people's desires for participation through the state are different depending on the relationships with state authorities and experiences of involuntary participation. Frustrating experiences from contacting security or justice officers could indirectly increase more positive participation with local government officials, such as *kamnan* and *phuyaiban*, who local people trust more than the assigned officials from other regions. Even though personal negative experiences discouraged political participation through the state, the same experiences can lead to a greater desire of people to participate more through other channels, such as civil society organizations.

H4: A weak civil society failing to promote popular interests and resist state domination will lead to more conflict.

Overall, the roles of CSOs are increasing in the Deep South. Civil society in the conflict areas of the Deep South has immensely developed and expanded since the renewal of violence in 2004. Their activities receive huge support financially and in other ways from both state and non state actors. In one sense, civil society can be perceived as strong, since its activities have more financial support, can develop better political skills, and can help strengthen expression for local people in conflict areas. CSOs in the Deep South were also strengthened and able to engage in the policy-making process more effectively through the expansion of the CSO networks. For example the Women's agenda for Peace itself comprises 23 CSOs in the Deep South and they have joined together in many political campaigns. Since there is collaboration among CSOs, they can draw in a wider group of individuals to take part in civil society activities. However, despite the increasing number of civil society networks and CSOs in the Far South, many civil society activists were familiar faces who worked for several CSOs at the same time. There were concerns that if civil society in the Deep South was led by only a certain limited group of people, mostly middle class, it limited access to grassroots participation, and policies represented by civil society were likely to be opposed by local people. In this sense, civil society in the Deep South is oriented toward the middle class, who need it least, rather than those at the grassroots, who need it most due to their inability to communicate effectively with the Thai state. So, their ability to formulate local programs still needs a lot of improvement.

In addition, civil society organizations in the Deep South rarely expanded their network beyond the region. Without the participation and support of people from other regions, who are a majority in the country, the proposed policies tended to be ignored.

Moreover, for the government, civil society is most of the time regarded as challengers for power, rather than a collaborator for solving problema and a partner to support state functions. The thesis finds that, despite its strengths, civil society is facing problems in that most CSO activities are controlled by the state, which distorts them into state directions. In general, the strength of civil society strongly depends on state policy. The state is considered to be the most critical actor in setting conditions and agendas for civil society (Chong and Elies 2011: 9). However, a number of civil society organizations in Thailand's Deep South could not run their activities properly and freely. Despite the fact that the roles of civil society are very significant, especially for a divided society, the Thai state still limited their roles in some ways, as discussed in chapter 6.

The degree of government control is different depending on the degree of violence and level of trust in CSOs. For some CSOs, government control came in the form of funding, for some CSOs, government control came in the form of threatening. Both ways of government control negatively affects political participation and, in turn, obstructs the state's objective of national integration. Thus, despite the existence of a growing number of CSOs, when people realize that their participation is influenced by state control, they may turn to violence as they think it is the only means to resist and freely express their opposing political views. However, even though government control leads some people to violence, there are a number of people who participate through CSOs, as they see participation as the only way that they can peacefully express their resistance to the state and violence in the south.

H5: A strong state preventing demands and closing channels for peaceful political participation will lead to more conflict.

Based on the study and the literature, Thailand in the Lower South is considered as a strong and coercive state in which popular participation in politics, particularly for those living in the midst of conflict and violence, is more likely limited and controlled. In general, the openness of political participation is a function of the state. However, the Thai state perceives such high participation of the Malay-Muslims as both a pacifier and a danger, depending on forms of participation. On the one side, the Thai government wanted to reduce the strong feelings and normalize the situation by encouraging more participation. The Thai state knows that to win this war, they need to find more alliances with people and that can be done through promoting more participation. The government learned from its past mistakes that limiting participation can lead to more resistance. To lessen the risk of resistance from both militants and local people, the Thai state then selectively promoted participation as a tool to get people on its side. Then, political participation can serve to alleviate conflict and as a means of impeding Malay-Muslims from turning against the Thai state.

On the other hand, since the three southernmost provinces are considered a major concern for Thai national security, having such high political participation of the Malay-Muslims, especially if that participation is in opposition to the state's desired direction, can be considered as a threat to Thai security. So, we see many times that, for example, the military are sent to visit some activists at their home to let them know that the military is watching their every move, or some political movement, such as those that call for self-determination are warned off. Therefore, the Thai government considered some civic movements of the Malay-Muslims as a threat to national security, rather than a channel of political participation that people use to express their demands to the state.

This means that people in the Deep South could not participate the same way as people in other regions and are less likely to influence policies at the national level. This lead to local problems not being fully solved through the state's channels. Although deterring the locals from participation (and joining the opposition against the state rather than bringing in more people to participate peacefully through state provided channels) is not in the state's best interest, a strong state tends to limit channels of popular participation.

We found that the Thai state controls the participation of people in the Deep South through either funding or coercion, decreaseing meaningful participation and making some participation seem illegitimate. After the rise in conflict in 2004, the Thai state used different tactics to direct political participation of the Malay-Muslims in the conflict areas. Most tactics aimed to increase the power of the state by interfering in political activities. Since the Thai state had experienced many violent acts from the Malay-Muslim rebels for a very long time, it is understandable why the state is always suspicious of the Malay-Muslim peaceful movements. While promoting participation is one of the state's functions, the state also has authority to handle any political movement that would pose a threat to national security.

However, Thai governments and the local security command always have problems in their inability to differentiate between demands for political participation or decentralization and demands for separatism. So, their reactions toward some forms of political participation are sometimes not helpful. For example, the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) offered more than 50 millions baht from the government budget to the civil society sector in 2016. There were more than 200 CSOs that submitted their projects for SBPAC consideration (*Manager*, 21 August 2017). On the one hand, this strategy motivated many local civil society activists to take part in local development. On the other hand, with the selective funding, only some particular CSO projects would be approved. For some groups, such as student groups that promote self-determination, their hope for receiving

government funding is almost zero. While screening is necessary to make sure that the separatists will not have more money for more violent incidents, the Thai state should show more concern for the groups that just have different views, but are not fond of violent means and should allow their voices to be heard. We found from the study and literature that, when people realized that their participation is not baed on free will, they may turn to violence as they think it is the only means they can resist and freely express their opposing political views. This led to even more conflict and deeper grievances by locals as noted in the hypothesis.

Implications for the literature

In this thesis we draw attention to the relationship between conflict and political participation by examining the case of conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand. We started the study by examining the general concept and definition of political participation and found that it is relatively vague and varies widely in usage and meaning: there is no consensus on the meaning of political participation. A similar political activity can be considered differently in the various theoretical concepts. For example, according to the definition of Huntington and Nelson (1976: 4-7), political participation can include any activity, whether legal or not, that is "designed to influence governmental decision-making" (Huntington and Nelson 1976: 4). Thus, illegal acts, such as insurgent violence, can be considered as one type of participation, according to their definition. Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978: 46) defined political participation in a more narrow way. They argued that political participation should only include "those legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or actions that they take." So, according to Verba, Nie, and Kim, insurgent violence is not political participation because it is not considered a legal act.

If we limit a study on political participation to only legal participation, we would not be able to see whether illegal political participation could impact other types of participation, and vice versa. Based on this study, insurgent violence is partly caused by the limitation of legal political participation in the conflict areas. When legal channels of participation do not open for Malay-Muslims to make their demands, people look for other choices. Some might then choose to participate illegally to make demands on the Thai state. On the other hand, insurgent violence can generate more participation in conflict areas. It creates a greater desire for people to be more active in politics through peaceful means as they seek to reduce suffering from the insurgent violence.

Moreover, there are some types of political participation where people are forced to participate involuntarily without aiming at influencing government policies. Involuntary participation is not included in the definition of political participation of a number of academics (Huntington and Nelson 1976, Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978, and Traut and Emmert 1993), because this kind of participation is not a person's choice and may not tell us anything about participation. However, the study found that involuntary participation is important as it greatly impacted on voluntary participation. If we do not consider forced participation, we may overlook how negative experiences from participation forced by state authorities threaten people and cause them to avoid participating voluntarily through other forms. And we may not realize how those subjected to involuntary participation transform negative experiences from being forced to participate into a motive for more positive voluntary participation.

This thesis also investigated factors influencing political participation during conflict. Based on this study, we found that there are multiple factors influencing political participation. For non conflict areas, the "resource model" or "standard SES model" (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady

1995) that argued individuals with high socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in politics than individuals with low levels of socioeconomic status seemed to be accurate. When looking at political participation through elections in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts of Songkhla where the areas were among the poorest districts of the province, the data showed they had the lowest voter turnout in the province (see Figure 4-15). However, the standard SES model cannot explain the high level of political participation of people in the conflict areas that had low education. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6, women's political participation through civil society in conflict areas of the Deep South provided evidence against the SES model. In spite of an increasing level of female education in the Deep South, (See Figure 6-2), a number of women in the Deep South who took part in civil society activities were poor and could not afford to study, such as the two female civil society activists, Yaenah and Som, who were discussed in Chapter 6.

The life cycle model (Milbrath 1965, Glenn and Grimes 1968, Nie, Verba, and Kim 1974, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Jennings and Markus 1988), posits that political participation generally increases with age, but with the young and the old less likely to engage in the community. Based on the work in this thesis, we found that the explanation of the life cycle model and the case study in this thesis to some extent, do not match. Political participation in the Deep South showed political activeness of the younger generation beginning before the re-emergence of conflict and violence in 2004, as discussed in Chapter 3, and participation of the youth has increased and expanded through many student groups' activities from then to now, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Trust in the political system also impacts the desire for political participation. As Nelson (1979: 1027) mentioned, individuals with high levels of trust in the political system tend to participate less than those individuals who have a lower level of trust. He explained that people with trust perceive state authorities as problem solvers and believe the community

is in good hands with trusted officials. In the Deep South, cultivating trustworthiness in the midst of conflict areas is difficult. Based on the study, we found that it is not trust that motivated Malay-Muslims to participate in the Thai political system; instead, it is the feeling of distrust that motivated them to participate in Thai politics, violently and non-violently. Distrust is one of the most vital factors that can either encourage or discourage participation in a community**.** However, in conflict areas, distrust means participation, when it occurs, becomes personalized. Based on this study, local people have trust in some state authorities, but not in state institutions. When trusted officials move to other areas, trust goes with them. Officials transferring in then need to build new relationships. When institutional trust is not created, we can expect lower and inconsistent participation.

As discussed in previous chapters, due to the long history of the fight between the Malay-Muslims and Thai state, the Thai government always had suspicions of the Malay-Muslims. Since the Thai state lacked trust in Malay-Muslims, they were deprived from working in administrative positions in the Far South and their political representatives were more or less ignored in the Thai parliament. Moreover, the close surveillance and aggressive actions by the Thai state and its officials towards the Malay-Muslims destroyed trustworthiness in the Thai political system. Based on this study, the distrust in the Thai political system can also lead to political participation in a community. The high voter turnout in conflict areas, as discussed in Chapter 4, is evidence of this. Political participation through election seems to be the simplest way to respond to distrust. As the past voter turnout demonstrated, people in conflict areas in southern Thailand went to vote at a higher level than people in other areas without conflict. Moreover, the study showed there are relationships between level of conflict and violence and political participation through elections (see Figure 4-3, Figure 4-5, and Figure 4-6). So, in the high violence conflict areas where distrust is seemingly higher than other areas, political participation is, in turn, high.

The prolonged conflict in southern Thailand has worn away social trust and unity and the coercive regime of the Thai state has suppressed participation. This condition can expand conflict and violence. The remoteness and distrust of the Thai state opened the opportunity for the militants to intervene and draw in more Malay-Muslims to join the insurgency.

Many scholars also pay attention to the relationship between culture, ethnicity and political participation (Wilson and Banfield 1971, Greeley 1974, Nelson 1979, Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981, Lien 1994, Wrinkle et.al 1996, and Albritton and Denton 2008). They believed that cultural and ethnic identifications influence political participation to a significant degree. The feeling of shared identity creates a connection between members of an ethnic community and that connection shapes political participation. Based on the study, we found that evidence from the Deep South of Thailand significantly supported this conception. The Malay-Muslims have a long history of fighting to preserve their ethnic identity. When the Thai government promoted assimilation policies that exacerbated the conception of Thai-self and other-selves, Malay-Muslims considered the assimilation policies as a direct attack on their religious, linguistic and cultural identity. While some minorities in the country decided to yield, the Malay-Muslims in the southern border provinces of Thailand chose not to act according to the government's instructions on integration policy. They opposed these policies in different ways to protect their heritage and ethnicity. As discussed throughout the thesis, some joined separatist groups, some participated by voting to have their Malay-Muslim representatives in the Thai parliament, some ran for election to take part in the state making decision process, and some participated in civil society activities to call for their rights. So, in this case, the two variables, ethnicity and political participation, are related to each other. The feeling of shared identity and shared grievances increased the desire to participate for the Malay-Muslims.

Among the factors mentioned earlier, the thesis found that political participation of people in conflict areas is motivated significantly by their experiences of conflict and violence. The relationship between political participation and the experiences of conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand is in accord with the results of the study in Sierra Leone by John Bellows and Edward Miguel (2006) and in Uganda by Chris Blattman (2009). Both studies agreed that negative experiences from conflict increased political awareness and participation. Victims of conflict are more likely to participate in voting and community meetings. In the Deep South of Thailand, the thesis found that if we look within the high violence conflict areas, there is a relationship between level of political participation through elections and levels of conflict and violence: The more frequent the violent incidents, the higher the level of voter turnout. A desire to participate is not always the immediate result, it arises at later stages from unfavorable experiences (Mezey 1975: 508). Based on the study, there are a number of Malay-Muslims who did not have experience or interest in political activities, but experiences of conflict and violence motivated them to be more interested and to participate in politics. As discussed in Chapter 6, many Malay-Muslim youth and women, who had negative experiences from violent incidents and forced participation, decided to participate in CSO activities as both activists and participants to help those in their communities who experienced the same fate. One example is the case of Anchana Heemmina and Pattama Heemmina, who were local entrepreneurs from Saba Yoi district of Songkhla province and had no interest in political activities. The accumulated experiences from involuntary participation during the conflict changed and, at the same time, developed, their political skills. They later founded the Duayjai group to help other victims of the conflict (see Chapter 6).

The conflict in the Deep South of Thailand has lasted longer than the oldest living Thai in the region and has not been inflamed by one single factor but by multiple causes such as historical grievances, religious differences, social and economic marginalization, the injustice of the political system, and limited political expression. In the midst of conflict, frightened people often avoid risky behaviors because fear "heightens the desire for security" (Peterson 2002: 68). As a result, some people are too fearful to participate in any political activities; some distrust the state and prefer to close their eyes to politics, especially on any issue related to the conflict.

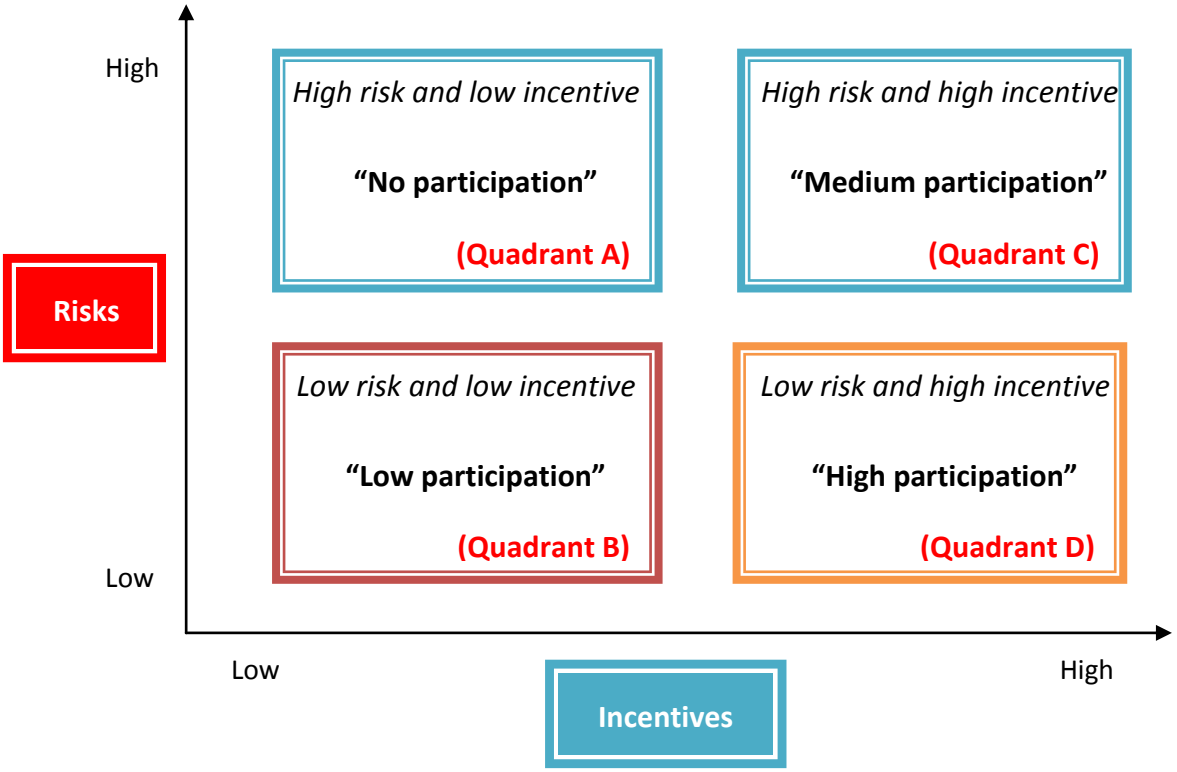
However, the same grievances can lead to the opposite reaction. As Oskars Thoms and Ron James (2007) mentioned, denial of political participation is linked to internal conflict. Abuses of rights such as inequality in accessing basic needs or to political participation can be recognized as "direct conflict triggers" that lead to conflict emergence and escalation (Thoms and James 2007: 704). This condition, on the one hand, can expand conflict and violence. On the other hand, it pushes people to be more active in politics through peaceful means as they seek to alleviate suffering from the violence. The same factors that lead to conflict can also be a pathway leading more people to peaceful political participation. As Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson (2009: 94) noted, "the greater the level of participation by all political communities and domestic constituencies, the higher the likelihood that certain problems can be alleviated before they turn into serious and irresolvable conflict."

Implications for Thai politics

The thesis suggests several important implications for Thai politics in regard to the ongoing conflict and violence in the Deep South of Thailand.

A first implication is that the level of political participation greatly depends on the level of threats and incentives. Living in the midst of conflict and violence causes both risks and incentives that influence different levels of participation of people in conflict areas, as shown in figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1: A political participation matrix



The risk and incentive chart shown in Figure 7-1 is based on the comparative study among the non violence, low violence, and high violence conflict areas of the study in this thesis. The risks in this study can be divided into two types, which are risks from insurgents, such as violent incidents and being threatened by militant groups, and risks from the state, such as coming under suspicion as a suspected insurgent, or extrajudicial killings. Incentives refer to a number of positive things that encourage a person to participate. Incentives are, for example, a decrease of violent incidents, community development, financial compensation, and justice.

Quadrant A, high risk and low incentive in figure 7-1, is the worst case scenario of the political participation matrix. High risks make people feel afraid and unsafe to participate in political activities. Under the condition of high risks, if people do not perceive strong incentives for participation or do not think participating is worth taking risks, political participation does not occur. We cannot expect political participation of people with high risks and low incentives to reach a higher level, unless either risks are lower or incentives are higher or both. Political participation is facilitated under other conditions in the following quadrants, which will be explained below in Quadrant B, C, and D.

Quadrant B, low risks and low incentives in Figure 7-1, represents political participation in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts, non violence conflict areas of Songkhla province. Overall, people in Ranot and Sathing Phra have low threats from the conflict and violence in local disputes, and they are not directly affected by violent incidents in the Deep South. Since the threats of participation are lower than in the conflict areas, incentives to participate in public activities then may not be strong enough to create motivation to participate voluntarily, unless the issue has a direct impact on participants.

As discussed in Chapter 4, as a result of having low incentives, most voters, especially those working in other provinces, perceived it not worthwhile to go back home to vote, except in local level elections where incentives might be higher. Voter turnouts in Ranot and Sathing Phra districts showed lower rates than those in Chana and Thepha districts, the low violence conflict areas in the same province. People in non violence conflict areas not only had low participation rates in elections, but also, as discussed in Chapter 5, voluntary participation through the state was short-term and mostly done on a one-off basis. Similarly, political participation in civil society also showed lower levels than in conflict areas; as discussed earlier in Chapter 6, most civil society groups in Ranot and Sathing Phra were loosely formed to achieve a single objective. When a problem is solved, political participation regularly decreases or is discontinued.

Quadrant C, high risk and high incentive in figure 1, fits the high violence conflict areas of Mueang Pattani and other high violence conflict areas in the Deep South. Living in the conflict areas unavoidably led to high risks for political participation. Based on the study, the conflict and violence that increased risks for local people to participate could also lead to high incentives, in which people had a strong desire to participate peacefully to stop the violence.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the study found that the ongoing conflict and violence did not weaken political participation of voters in national elections. On the contrary, the conflict and violence triggered more participation and enhanced the degree of political participation in the conflict areas of the Lower South. As shown in Chapter 4, voter turnouts in national elections in the Deep South since the emergence of violence in 2004 were higher than the national average in most elections. Political participation through elections is not only the simplest means of participation, but also the risks of voting are lower than other types of participation. Since the vote is confidential, voters do not have to be afraid of expressing their

political standpoints though their choice of voting. However, since people in the conflict areas still had to face high risks from violent incidents, as sporadically occurred on election days, levels of participation through voting were not as high as in low violence conflict areas, where the risks are lower.

In contrast, voter turnouts in senate elections in the high violence conflict areas were not as high as in national elections. As shown in Figure 4-7, although voter turnouts of Senate elections in the Deep South were higher than the national average, the data shows a decreasing trend of participation in senate elections. This means that incentives for voting can be decreased when voters in the conflict areas believed, under a less democratic election, that their votes could not bring much change to the community. Under this condition, we can expect lower participation if incentives are decreased. When the incentives are low, there is a possibility that levels of political participation can move from Quadrant C to Quadrant A, high risks and low incentives, the worst case in the matrix. This means that voters who have low incentives to vote, may neglect voting and have no desire to participate. As a result, the levels of political participation shift from medium to none.

Political participation through the state in the high violence conflict areas also showed ineffectiveness, as discussed in Chapter 5. The high risks from forced participation and the illegitimate justice system decreased Malay-Muslims' desire to contact the Thai state voluntarily. Forced participation resulted in negative experiences with state authorities, such as maltreatment during detention and mental suffering from imprisonment. Some people tended to avoid participation, if not forced, and some might even turn against the Thai state turning to violent actions. However, high risks from participation through the state also increased incentives to participate in other channels. Political participation through civil society in the high violence conflict areas is quite high, as discussed in Chapter 6. However, due to the level of being control under special security laws, the freedom of CSOs is limited.

Some activities related to security issues, such as promoting Patani self-determination and human rights violation campaigns, are prohibited by the military. Despite the high capability of CSOs in the Deep South in promoting more participation in the conflict areas, they were not able to increase participation for most people to a higher level.

The D quadrant, low risk and high incentive in Figure 7-1, is the most desirable case for political participation. Quadrant D represents low violence conflict areas, Chana and Thepha districts of Songkhla. The degree of risks from conflict and violence in Chana and Thepha districts is not so much the result of people feeling afraid to participate. However, the lower degree of conflict and violence created stronger incentives for villagers to seek to protect their community from more violence. Incentives for participation of villagers in Chana and Thepha were high enough to motivate them to overcome the risks. With high incentives associated with low risks of danger from violent incidents and forced participation, people in low violence conflict areas see more opportunities to stop the conflict and violence through political participation. Therefore, they participated at a higher level than both the areas that did not have a record of violence and the high violence conflict areas of the Deep South.

As discussed in Chapter 4, voters in Chana and Thepha were found to be very active in elections, as shown by the high rates of voter turnout in national elections between 2001 and 2011 (see Figure 4-15 and 4-17). Political participation through the state in low violence conflict areas was also high, as stated in Chapter 5. Although the study found that there are some disappointments in the performances of state authorities in Chana and Thepha, their negative perceptions are not high enough to turn into risk factors. Based on the study, involuntary participation caused fewer problems than in high violence conflict areas where the degree of suspicion between people and state is higher. Local people feel less fear of having direct contact with state officials. For example, they, as shown by interviews, did not

hesitate to inform state officials when they noticed something unusual; the number of people in low violence conflict areas who contacted justice officers to file a civil action was 50% higher than the number of civil cases the Court of Justice received in the high violence conflict areas of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat (see Figure 5-2). A good relationship with state authorities created more incentives of participation as local people perceive a possibility of protecting their community through cooperating with state authorities. The lower barriers from participation and high incentives to prevent an escalation of violence in their community positively affected an increase of political participation in low violence conflict areas.

However, not every type of participation was at a high level in Chana and Thepha. As discussed in Chapter 6, while they participated at a high level in elections and by contacting the state, political participation through civil society showed the opposite results. People in Chana and Thepha did not have a language barrier in contacting the Thai state themselves. They did not need a CSO to act or speak out for them. So, the incentive of participation in civil society is lower. In addition, since Chana and Thepha have a low rate of violent incidents, the area does not attract many civil society activists. So, incentives of both villagers and activists are low. Thus despite the low of risks, people in the low violence conflict areas do not participate at the same high rate in some activities where they do not see high incentives.

The thesis shows that the conflict and violence, though considered as threats, in some way can increase incentives for political participation of people who suffer from the ongoing crisis and would like to see their society change for the better. However, there is higher participation in low level violence conflict areas than in high violence conflict areas because people in the low violence conflict areas do not have to be afraid of deadly threats from bombings or shootings to the same degree as those in the high violence conflict areas. Thus,

they do not have to be too concerned when they go out to cast their ballots or participate in public activities. Secondly, due to lower risks and stronger incentives, people in the low violence conflict areas accepted the possibility of controlling the violence to protect their community from more threats. Lastly, state control of political participation in low violence conflict areas was more accepted than in the high violence conflict areas. Unlike the Martial Law Act and the Emergency Decree, the Internal Security Act, which was enforced in the least violent areas including Chana and Thepha districts of Songkhla, is considered to be the most moderate. When more channels of political participation are opened and supported by the state, people can participate more freely without fear. When the risks from participation are low, we can expect higher participation.

The study allows us to see the relationships between the levels of risks and incentives and the levels of political participation in the conflict areas. The study found that people tend to participate at a high level when they have low risks and high incentives. This means that in order to increase participation of people in the high violence conflict areas, which have high risks and high incentives, threats needed to be lower. The two types of possible risks in the conflict areas, which are risks from insurgents and risks from the state, needed to be taken into consideration.

From past years the Thai state paid more attention to decrease risks from the insurgents through violent means without much realization, or intentionally ignore, on the fact that risks also came from the state side. Risks from the state in the conflict areas are obvious, yet overlook by the Thai state, as discussed in Chapter 5. Despite attempts to decrease threats from insurgents for years, the prolonged conflict and violence more or less proved a failure on state's violent policies to eliminate risks from insurgency. Although it is undeniable that violent means are necessary for fighting with insurgents, it is not the only way. Political participation is one of the effective tools that can bring down the conflict.

When people participate within the Thai political system, it means that they turn back on the violence. If the state could promote more supportive environment for local people to participate, we can expect higher participation.

A second implication is that in conflict areas, personal trust is important but trust in state institutions is the key to national integration. Although there were attempts by state authorities, including security forces, to increase trust and encourage more positive relationships, as discussed in Chapter 5, individual state officials, no matter how effective they are, cannot really change things. In conflict areas, trust and participation depends on personal relationships with state officials rather than on trust in the Thai state. This means that whenever a state official is transferred, trust and participation disappears because the institutional face of the state is not trusted, just some of its individual members. When local people do not trust state institutions, they do not voluntarily participate.

Even though the security policy towards the Deep South gradually changed to accept more openness to public hearings and participation, the problem of trust still exists. The state security agencies gradually realized the importance of political participation and wanted to promote political participation of all parties in order to gain more support from the local. Thus political participation is nowadays more often described as an indicator of state policy effectiveness. Even though the Thai government nowadays provides many channels of political participation to the Malay-Muslims, the political participation in a conflict area is still restricted by the state's close watch and tight control under the application of Martial law. Therefore, although the state's policy gradually changed to be more positive to participation, due to the feeling of suspicion and distrust and the concern for national security, the Thai state still centralizes its power and control of participation of Malay-Muslims to a large degree.

Ultimately, we found that trust, or a lack of trust, is the most important underlying issue of the conflict. Lack of trust in the conflict areas is one of the fundamental problems this makes it difficult for the Thai state to implement its policies successfully in the Deep South. So, unless the problem of trust is resolved, voluntary participation through the state and civil society, especially in the high violence conflict areas would be difficult to develop. To build trust in the state as an institution takes time, especially in the conflict areas, but it is not an impossible goal. The roles of the SBPAC in the Deep South can be a good example of a successful case.

Unlike other military-run centers, the SBPAC applied peaceful strategies to deal with local grievances and promote political participation of local people. The SBPAC board and its staff comprise many locals, both Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims, from different backgrounds, who have a better understanding of in culture and grievances of Malay-Muslims in the Deep South. For non-Malay staff, the SBPAC provided training to increase knowledge and understanding of Malay-Muslim culture and language before posting them in conflict areas. Moreover, although the structure of the institution sometimes changed when the government changed, the major policy that focusing on promoting political participation continued. Regular seminars for Malay-Muslims to share their grievances and exchange their opinions with government agencies are arranged. Conferences with CSOs in the conflict areas are frequently organized. This participation throughout 30 years of its establishment creates a bond among the SBPAC, local people, and CSOs. The continuous performance of the SBPAC gradually built trust in the institution. When institutional trust is created, political participation in the Deep South can be expanded more effectively. If a culture like that in the SBPAC can be built across entire institutions, the problem of trust in the Thai state may be overcome.

A third finding is that gender is a crucial factor in political participation, especially in Malay-Muslim society. When the roles of Malay-Muslim men are restricted during the conflict, many Malay-Muslim women stepped in for the sake of their family and community. However, based on the study, most channels of participation seemed to limit participation of women. As discussed in Chapter 4, since Thailand first elected MPs in 1933, there has been only one female Malay-Muslim politician, Pornpich Pattanakullert, from Narathiwat province. After 2004, the re-emergence of violence created high barriers that seemingly made it even more difficult for women to win elections. The number of female candidates in the general elections decreased (see Figure 4-13). Some Malay-Muslim voters were convinced by other candidates that voting for a female candidate was a sin. Since 2005, only one female candidate stood in each general election. None of them were elected.

At the same time, many Malay-Muslims became indirect victims who suffer a lot from the loss of their loved ones, due to the prolonged conflict and violence. Even though the conflict and violence directly affect them, due to cultural limitations, Malay-Muslim women are seldom involved in the violent conflict. However, the situation forced them to participate through contacting the state. They have no choice, but to participate involuntarily for the sake of their family. For example, some wives had to take part through the legal system to fight for justice for their husbandsm, and some mothers had to contact state authorities for financial remedies for the deaths of their sons. Since some Malay-Muslim women cannot understand Thai and lack education, they faced many difficulties in contacting the Thai state.

Apart from voting, political participation through civil society seems to be the only real means of voluntary participation for most women. Women are not direct targets of either the state or the militants, so that the conflict, in other ways, opens an opportunity for women to participate more safely with less fear of state abuses. The risks of political participation for women were considered lower than for Malay-Muslim males, while women's grievances

from conflict and violence are high. Their grievances turn into strong incentives to participate. Having low risks, but high incentives, as shown previously, leads to a high level of participation. However, as discussed earlier in Chapter 6, some Malay-Muslim female activists faced discriminated in political rights from some conservative Malay-Muslims. Some are treated as second class citizens who have lower status than males. This cultural barrier limited capabilities of Malay-Muslim women and discouraged women's participation in the public arena. Promoting women's participation, especially in Muslim communities, might be challenging but the increasing roles of female activists in the Deep South proved it was not impossible. An increase in women's participation in the Deep South is reshaping the culture so that it is more acceptable for women to have leading roles in society. Women have a complex set of capabilities and challenges. They can be seen as strong and submissive, effective and harmless. Their non-violent involvement can easily get support and trust from both the state and local people. So, female political participation has the potential to draw more involvement from other actors in conflict areas. In addition, the vastly expanded role of women in participation will be important in the long run, even after the conflict.

Lastly, the conflict and violence in the Deep South, as devastating as it has been for society and many individuals, also created new strengths and abilities in some people. The same concerns that lead to violence can also lead to participation; furthermore the violence itself acts as another motivation for participation. Based on the study, living in the midst of conflict, prolonged grievances and the aggressive policies of a coercive state creates complex feelings that cause different reactions through various means of participation. Some chose to react violently. When peaceful participation is seemingly ineffective for them, they decided to use violent methods to make demands of the Thai state. The conflict and violence, in this case, act as a driver for more violence by pushing people to violent actions to fight against the Thai state.

However, this study finds that people in the conflict areas of the Deep South do not disregard peaceful participation. In contrast, they show a greater desire for political participation through many channels. Political participation through voting in most elections shows an increasing rate, as discussed in Chapter 4. The study found that there is a relationship between level of political participation through elections and levels of conflict and violence: the more frequent the violent incidents, the higher the level of voter turnout. Political participation through the state may be problematic as local people distrust state authorities and vice versa. The negative experiences from forced participation, such as participating in security case trials, on the one hand, estranged local people from the state. On the other hand, it greatly impacted voluntary participation, and the other way around. As discussed in Chapter 5, the relationship between local people and national civil servants might be poor but at the same time it indirectly strengthened political participation with the elected local officials, especially for the grassroots in rural conflict areas where voluntary participation gets stymied.

In the Deep South, illegal and involuntary participation has been an important stimulus to meaningful changes because legal and voluntary forms of participation are not effective. When people feel that existing channel of participation are not effective, they have two choices: give up or find some other way. For the Deep South, their motivation to participate is so strong that they just cannot give up easily and violent or peaceful participation may be their last hope.

Political participation through civil society is increasing and expanding to various fields, as discussed in Chapter 6. Participation in civil society allows local people who have difficulties in participating directly with the state to be able to make their demands to the Thai state through civil society organizations. Political participation through civil society works best when it reaches the grassroots level and without selective state controls. Based on the

study, we found that the expanding roles of CSOs in the Deep South cannot reach the grassroots level in rural areas, where people really need assistance from civil society the most. Most CSOs are based in urban areas, such as Mueang districts and most participants and civil society activists are then concentrated in the urban areas and provided more opportunities for the middle class, who can access the activities more easily but needed the least help from civil society, to participate.

The high rates of participation through various channels is a good sign that people suffering from the violence do not always resort to violence, or abandon commitment to Thai political institutions. Rather many people choose to participate and fight within the Thai political system. This study shows that conflict and participation can be linked in a positive way, in which conflict and violence leads to a greater desire for meaningful political participation and when people participate, it leads to less violence. But somehow, the military may perceive this linkage differently. This study finds that the military tried to control participation because they probably believe controlling participation can control violence. The Thai state controls participation through either bribes or coercion. When political participation is controlled by the state, it became illegitimate. Thus political participation that is supposed to lead to bottom up policies is still top down and ineffective. When people realized that their participation is actually tainted and controlled by the state, they may turn to violence as they think it is the only means they can resist and freely express their opposing political views. However, there are a number of people in the Deep South, who still participate peacefully, despite knowing that participation is undermined by state influence. Participation, though leading to national integration, can also be a tool for challenging the state control. Some people participate with the state, even when theydo not agree, because by participating it can also show the state that they want to resist.

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